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‘The Glory of God is Humanity Fully Alive: Exploring Eastern Orthodoxy as a resource for human development in conversation with the capability approach’

Dana Bates

OCMS, Ph.D

Abstract

This dissertation argues that Eastern Orthodox theology is a framework for multidimensional social change or improvement and can inform, and be informed by the multi-disciplinary social science field of development studies. This claim will be examined by analyzing the Trinitarian theology of the Orthodox theologian Dumitru Staniloae in relation to the writings of Nobel Economist Amartya Sen and his ‘capability approach’.

The argument begins by justifying EO’s interaction with development studies based on her anthropological optimism. Critical is that supernatural revelation stands very close to and builds on natural revelation. A Trinitarian theological anthropology then provides a rationale for, and integration of, three key concepts in the social sciences: agency, solidarity, and structures. This analytical framework is then used to assess the challenges of post-Communist contexts, where most Orthodox live. The Communist downfall, it is argued, involved a failure to incorporate each of these dimensions in human development. This analysis then serves to test the adequacy of, and reveal weaknesses in, Amartya Sen’s freedom-focused social evaluation framework known as the capability approach.

The dissertation proceeds with examining Orthodox salvation as movement from Being, to Well-being, to Eternal-being where Well-being is, notably, the exercise of agency to develop the potentials given in Being. Agency is not individualistic, but is structured into the virtues of solidarity and incorporates the related notion of *phronesis* (practical reason). The virtue tradition is then postulated as a promising link between theology and development studies. The virtue tradition is analyzed in its classical background, modern human development, as well as both Protestantism and Catholicism to facilitate a comparison with Eastern Orthodoxy. This analysis shows that Orthodoxy offers a theological framework for human development in that she gives priority of practical reason to contemplation, makes virtually no separation between grace and nature, and provides a relevant method for synergizing salvation history with action on behalf of human development.

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Orthodoxy as a resource for human development in conversation with
the capability approach’

by

Dana Bates

B.A. (Gordon College)

M-Div (Gordon-Conwell)

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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May 22, 2013

Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed  (Candidate)

Date May 18th 2013

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed  (Candidate)

Date May 18th 2013

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Date May 18th 2013

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This thesis was envisioned, obviously in a much more primitive state, at the Capabilities Conference in Pavia Italy, September 2004. There I first saw the basic connection between the image-likeness (Eastern Orthodoxy) and capability-functioning (capabilities approach) distinction that sparked this study. It was also there that I met one of my supervisors, Severine Deneulin, who has not only been a fantastic academic advisor, but a wonderful friend and support. I also want to thank Roland Hoksbergen of Calvin for his encouragement over the years, as well as my supervisor for Staniloae, Silviu Rogobete. Thanks are due to Young Life for allowing me to pursue this, as well as Northwestern (and especially Dave Nonnemacher's work along with Doug Carlson) and other colleges such as Calvin (and especially Jeff Bouman there) and Gordon who have sent their students to our Romania semester abroad, trusting that I would finish this project. I would also like to thank the many volunteers who have worked in various capacities with our organization, but especially the semester-abroad program administrators: Janelle Vandergrift, Daniel Heffner, Kadie Becker, and Alice McFarlane. I would also like to thank the SG Foundation and Patricia Beville for funding the first and final years of this research. Thanks are also due to OCMS and the staff there for their support.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA = Capability Approach

DS = Development Studies

EO = Eastern Orthodoxy

HD = Human Development

1. INTRODUCTION: EASTERN ORTHODOXY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

This study arose out of almost fifteen years of reflection on practice in a post-communist Eastern Orthodox country. In 1999, my wife and I moved to an impoverished coal-mining region of Romania to engage in youth development through experiential education. Romania had some of the worst experiences of Communism and the coal mining region we moved to is storied in terms of its underdevelopment and corruption. The early years of our time meant learning the hard way the real meaning of the expression “in Romania, everything is possible” and the wisdom of “Be wise as serpents...” Long years in court cases against what I thought were trusted friends; deep levels of deception and trickery including IRS (Garda Financiara) impersonations and constant disinformation schemes; such experiences were a painful baptism into the realities of corruption. Such experiences also meant coming to terms with the learned-helplessness, interpersonal suspicion, fear, and lack of civic engagement engendered by Communism. Within this challenging context, we created a replicable process through which youth can become agents of positive change, learning to work together to identify and rectify community burdens.

It was also within this context that I began to read Dumitru Staniloae and discerned that EO contains, even if it may not seem apparent, a powerful theology of transformative praxis, a theology that this thesis aims to disclose. At the end of this study, this “learn by doing” approach to youth development will be revisited as an effective way to address many of the challenges left by Communism.

* * * *

Eastern Orthodox theology is often considered a barrier to progress and indifferent to concepts such as human rights. This thesis will show that not only is this not the case, but her theology constitutes a powerful framework for human development. This will be demonstrated through a wide ranging conversation primarily between Dumitru Staniloae, representing Eastern Orthodoxy, and Nobel Economist Amartya Sen and his “capability approach” to human development.¹ This study has far ranging implications between East and West, between religious faith and modernity.

Readers familiar with Eastern Orthodox contexts are perhaps already uneasy. Eastern Orthodoxy (hereafter EO) and human development? EO and social action? Yes, at least in terms of a theological framework that brings these concepts into the very heart of salvation, even if it is recognized EO fails (like others) to fully achieve her own ideals.

Catholic theologian Catherine Lacugna noted the problem, but also the potential:

It is ironic that while Orthodox ethics may have the ontology and soteriology more appropriate to this ... ethicists in the West are the ones who have actually advanced the critique of personhood in its social and political dimensions (LaCugna 1991, p. 285).

It is important to note at the outset that this thesis is neither defending nor condemning social practice in societies where EO is the dominant religion. This is not to say that some features, such as the closeness of the Church and State and the focus on monastic spirituality, are unproblematic.² Rather the aim here is to explore the adequacy of EO’s conceptual tools to make sense of, motivate, and bring Christian faith into closer

¹ Human Development (HD) is a term used in many fields, not just the academic discipline of Development Studies (DS). As will be seen especially in chapter four, Sen’s Capability Approach (CA) is a specific way of conceptualizing human development (HD) within the broader academic field of DS, with the complication that HD is often used as a synonym for Sen’s CA.

² Many Orthodox argue similar criticisms as these (Nissiotis 1962).

integration with human development concerns. EO can make a fundamental contribution here because theological dogma (salvation itself) and social ethics (human development being an expression of this) are not separate domains as has been the case in Western theology (LaCugna 1991, p. 287; Abrams 2009).³

However, some will press further: why the stark gap between theory and practice in EO countries? There are several answers. Empirical studies have shown that the dominant influence in most Orthodox cultures is in fact not religion, but rather the corrupting effects of Marxist inspired Communism (Howard 2003, p. 16; Sandholtz and Taagepera 2005).⁴ Furthermore, EO cultures are relatively new to the challenges and pressures of modernity. As Rowan Williams argues, apart from a brief burst by Russia in the later 19th century, there was little theological vitality “in any other historically Orthodox society—partly for the simple reason that no other such society had enjoyed real cultural independence for centuries” (Williams 2005, p. 572), or around 500 years to be more precise (Harakas 1983, p. 16). Even Greece is barely beginning to develop an intellectual ethos of its own after an extended period of Ottoman occupation, evident in thinkers such as Christos Yannaras (Yannaras 2002; 2007). The long-range social potential of EO, developing its own vitality within democratic contexts and under its own leadership, is much too early to tell. These caveats noted, the argument concerning EO’s relevance for human development proceeds, allowing for the fact that EO cultures are often considered “backward” (Pollis 1993; Harrison 2006), but also that such assessments can be based on biased perceptions of the Orthodox world (Wolff 2001).

³ Lacugna notes: “The vision of ethics as *theosis* [salvation] directly links ethics to soteriology and theology, whereas, Harakas [an EO ethicist] rightly points out, ethics and dogmatic theology are quite distinct disciplines in Western theology” (LaCugna 1991, p. 287).

⁴ More specifically, East Germany, or Poland, for example, has similarly low rates of civil society participation as the rest of post-communist Europe (Howard 2003, p. 18).

Recognizing the uphill nature of the battle, perhaps the best way to address scepticism about EO and development is to lay out the argument of this thesis, chapter by chapter. After this, sources, audiences, and methodology will be considered.

Following this introduction, chapter two justifies this “dia-logue” between EO and development studies (DS). Chapter two articulates the *methodology* of the thesis (presented also briefly below), showing that a dialogue can legitimately be established between such apparently disparate domains as EO theology and DS. Here, the most fundamental point is that EO holds a rather optimistic view of the human condition and views her own theological reflection as taking place in close continuity, both being enhanced by, but also enhancing, general human wisdom.⁵ Protestant theologian Jurgen Moltmann notes that “Orthodox theology has preserved a creation wisdom which was pushed aside and lost in the West” (Moltmann 1993, p. xv). But perhaps surprisingly, it is Orthodoxy’s view of the Trinity that can establish the strongest links between EO theology and DS. The Trinity in EO (but especially clear in Staniloae) expresses an anthropology involving three distinct dimensions—person, communion, and shared nature. It will be argued that these correspond with, affirm, and synthesize three fundamental “values” in the human sciences: agency, solidarity, and structures—and that human development cannot be adequately conceptualized without affirming all three of these simultaneously.⁶ This Trinitarian analysis (which will be extended throughout the thesis) shows how theology can dialogue with but also contribute to the social sciences—even on its own terms. Then,

⁵ Indeed, some Orthodox thinkers argue that what faith provides is not any new content, but “the necessary motivation for the doing of the good” that is already generally recognized (Harakas 1983, p. 8).

⁶ If this connection between the Trinity and the social sciences seems like a stretch for those unfamiliar with Orthodoxy, consider that leading ethicist Stanley Harakas insists: “The affirmation that the Triune God is the supreme good does not exclude, but in fact includes aspects of all other understandings of the good developed by ethicists throughout history” (Harakas 1983, p. 33). He notes that this involves “in-born ethical capabilities”, the role of law, evolution, perfection, pleasure, all as partial perceptions of the good.

in order to establish the dialogue from the side of DS, DS is shown to be concerned with “change for the better”, which mirrors definitions of salvation within EO and coheres closely with the Second Great Commandment. The chapter finishes by arguing that, in order for meaningful dialogue to be possible, DS must gain critical distance from the notion that Western philosophical liberalism is the only basis for human development.

Chapter three places this dialogue between EO and DS in a wider context, both conceptually and geographically. First, there is an orientation to the discourse, or lack thereof, between Christian faith and the social sciences. Important here is Liberation Theology’s adoption of Marxist theory in Latin America, with which this project is an analogue. However, for EO geographical contexts, Marxist theory is untenable because it proved utterly tragic in practice. Marxism failed, it will be argued, precisely because it did not respect the Trinitarian picture of the human condition, which is to say it did not recognize the simultaneous importance of agency (person), solidarity (communion), and structures (nature’s norms). A misguided and unnatural “structuralism” destroyed both personal agency and interpersonal communion. An approach to development relevant for Orthodox contexts must come to terms with the effects of this disastrous global social science experiment.

Chapter four then analyzes Amartya Sen’s capability approach (CA) with this post-Communist situation in mind. Sen’s approach emphasizes “development as freedom” which is a necessary corrective to the agency-denying structuralism of Communism. However, as will be demonstrated, this focus on agency is insufficient by itself. Humans must also be conceptualized as communal beings, and not only this but also sharing in a common nature that serves as a basis of moral obligation to humanity as such. Making explicit these additional dimensions provides a more satisfying and coherent anthropological basis for Sen’s capability approach. Despite these problems with Sen’s

liberal/individualistic foundations, the capability approach still offers many helpful insights and can aid in conceptualizing an EO theology of human development.

Chapter Five then shifts to the dogma of the Incarnation and explores its relevance in the light of human development concerns. *Theosis* (deification) is multidimensional “change for the better”, which is identical to the definition of DS. *Theosis* as movement from “image into likeness” (or potentiality to actuality) reveals that deification and “humanification” are two sides of the same coin. Maximus the Confessor reframes this Hebraic idiom into a movement from Being, to Well-being, to Eternal-being where Well-being is the actualization of nature’s/Being’s potentials through the exercise of agency. Important here is that Orthodoxy views creational structures in a dynamic way; genuine progress or development is possible.

Chapter six introduces the question of whether virtue ethics can serve as a bridge between religious faith and development studies, a question that will remain until the end of the study. To systematically address this question, chapter six analyzes virtues first on the secular side. It begins with the classical background, especially Aristotle’s formulation, and then examines the virtues in modern day human development. It is argued that Sen’s individual freedoms can be more reliably linked to human development by employing the virtue theory that he dropped from his mentor Adam Smith. Other virtue approaches are then examined such as Martha Nussbaum’s and Positive Psychology which provides a more complete picture.

Chapter seven then discusses the virtues in Western theology as a basis for comparison with EO. Protestantism tended to repudiate the virtues in favour of a Divine Command theory and clues for the troubled conceptual relationship between faith and human development are sought here. Stanley Hauerwas is examined as a promising Protestant

entry, but his insistence that Christian virtues are absolutely distinctive undermines taking into account creational wisdom, or nature's norms. The Catholic affirmation of the virtues is then analyzed especially in terms of the natural-supernatural distinction and the privileging of contemplation over practical reason as in neo-scholasticism. This chapter also examines Jacques Maritain's role in human development, the changes that occurred at Vatican II, and several social encyclicals bearing on development.

Chapter eight, with this background in mind, investigates meta-ethical issues relating to Orthodox virtues. First, it is shown that Staniloae presents Orthodoxy as a "phronetic" science of human development, linking Orthodox salvation directly with practical reasoning which it places *prior* to contemplation.⁷ It is also shown that Orthodoxy has never split the virtues into natural and supernatural which brings grace in closer alignment with the development of natural powers. Lastly, the practical reasoning approach of Orthodoxy is compared with that in development studies, noting that Orthodoxy is not content to develop a universal list of desirable human functions, or identify injustices to be remedied, but advocates a therapeutic program for getting humans back on track for human development.

Chapter nine examines briefly the Orthodox list of virtues, showing how close these are to the concerns and vocabulary of human development. The pinnacle of the virtues, "love" is then examined in detail, arguing that it is both deeply communitarian and cosmopolitan. The doctrine of synergy is then introduced as the capstone of Orthodoxy, whereby salvation is not mere belief, but re-incarnating Christ's *philanthropia* in the world today. Synergy provides a theological framework that gives priority to God's initiative in salvation history, but links these great actions of God directly with practical reason

⁷ *Phronesis*, often translated prudence, wisdom, or practical reason, is a meta-virtue in that it includes all the other practical virtues.

(*phronesis*) understood as problem-solving on behalf of human development. Chapter ten concludes with a view towards clarifying the contribution to the various literatures, and returns to the question of youth development.

Looking again briefly at the thesis from the vantage point of these two dogmas, Trinity and Incarnation, can further clarify the argument. The first part of the thesis (chapters 2-4) establishes a Trinitarian theory of personhood which is used to analyze claims about the nature of human development within Marxism, Sen's approach, but also (later in the thesis) theological models such as Hauerwas and Maritain. Social theories (both secular and theological) imply both a "metaphysics" and a "model of man" which complement one another (Hollis 1980, p. 3). Social science theories, but also theology, have tended to see the person as individual agent, or as communal, or as structured (internally or externally), with various emphases given to these. The aim throughout this thesis, but especially in the first three chapters, is to show why each of these separated from the other is incomplete and that human development presupposes, even on secular terms, all three.

The second and other major structuring feature is the Incarnation, comprehending the rest of the thesis (chapters five through nine). Here, the virtues are pivotal because the virtues are not only the climax of EO *theosis*, but are emerging as a bridge between religious faith and development studies. This motivates a comparative analysis which aims to illuminate: a) the potentials and problems inherited from the classical conceptions and primarily Aristotle; b) how the virtues can enhance modern development debates; and c) the distinctiveness of EO vis-a-vis Protestantism and Catholicism. A corollary with this virtue approach is practical reason (*phronesis*) which is also explored as a bridge between EO and human development. Maximus affirms that "the Logos of God is revealed in practical things", or "rational, intelligent, thought through act", and Clement of Alexandria argued, "The life of Christians is a sort of system of rational acts" (Harakas 1983, p. 239).

Admittedly, this action orientation may not sound like modern Orthodoxy, but it is a fundamental part of the tradition meriting restatement in light of modern human development concerns. Indeed, EO ethicist Stanley Harakas notes:

In our day, in Orthodox theology, we are presently under the powerful influence of liturgy and mystical experience in Theology which tend to weaken the role of ethical concerns and interest in ethical living within the larger concept of what it means to be an Orthodox Christian. For Orthodoxy, this is erroneous (Harakas 1983, p. 4).

Beyond reasserting the ethical basis of EO in light of human development, the need for and timeliness of this research emerges from three further factors. First, there is a resurgence of scholarly interest in religion in the human sciences given the decline of the secularization hypothesis (Greeley 2003; Habermas and Ratzinger 2005; Martin 2005; Taylor 2007). Religion is returning from its long academic exile (Petito and Hatzopoulos 2003; Thomas 2005). Second, the dialogue between Christian faith and the human sciences was shaped without input from EO, and often was dominated by Protestant conceptions (Casanova 1994) where humanism was often regarded as a rebellion against God (Gillespie 2008, p. 292). Third, there is very little literature on EO and the human sciences, much less DS. This study contends that, despite this paucity, EO can integrate Christian faith and humanistic development concerns, and perhaps better than has been the case until now. If this seems a fantastic claim, recall simply the *pivotal* fact that in the West, dogma and social ethics (of which human development is an example) have been distinct domains, whereas in Orthodoxy they are interwoven.

It is important to note here what this study is not. It does not claim to be a comprehensive investigation of EO. Nicholas Cabasilas, in a classic text, wrote:

Two things, then, commend us to God, and in them lies all the salvation of men. The first is that we be initiated into the most sacred Mysteries, the second, that we train the will for virtue (Cabasilas 1974, p. 110).

This study does not explore the Mysteries and neither does it deal adequately with their ecclesial context (Staniloae 2012; 2012). It does not attempt a balanced approach to all Orthodox doctrines and emphases. Nor does it make any claim, and this is critical to avoid misinterpretation, to be a comprehensive “study of Staniloae”. Rather, the aim of this study is to trigger dialogue with the social sciences and development studies, and especially to highlight the role of practical reason (*phronesis*) at the heart of Orthodoxy. The leading intuition here is that EO can contribute to DS, but also that DS can contribute to theology, and it is in the very nature of Orthodox theology for this type of dialogue and mutual enrichment to occur.

This conversation between EO and DS, filtered through Dumitru Staniloae and Amartya Sen, should, however, be seen in its intended and more “ambitious” light. It is taking perhaps the best recent representatives of two traditions, EO and Enlightenment humanistic concerns, and analyzing their underlying values and vision of personhood. The decision to have these two in dialogue has thus provided the principal factor in the selection of sources. Furthermore, this research is in the spirit of Staniloae, considered among the greatest EO theologians of the 20th century. As one of his disciples argued, Staniloae “provided a broad basis for pursuing an intellectual dialogue with modern society, especially in the area of the humanities” (Staniloae 2000, p. xiii).⁸ It is thus hoped that any imbalances or omissions in this study will be seen in the light of attempting to do justice to these “activism” aspects.

A further word should be said about sources. There is sparse literature linking EO and development beyond a few short essays, and often in connection with the World Council of Churches (Nissiotis 1971; Tsetsis 1983). There is recent work on the Orthodox view of

⁸ Kallistos Ware argues that Staniloae’s theology “show[s] how every dogma corresponds to a deep need and longing of the human heart, and how it has practical consequences for society” (Staniloae 1994, p. xiv).

peacemaking (Asfaw, Chehadeh et al. 2012) as well as a call for Orthodox to develop their own distinctive “political theology” (Kalaitzidis 2012) as well as important entries into the field of ecology (Sherrard 1987) and the natural sciences (Nesteruk 1993).⁹ There are a few articles on key issues such as human rights (Harakas 1982; Pollis 1993; Guroian 1998).¹⁰ Elizabeth Prodromou and others have written important essays on Orthodoxy and democracy (Prodromou 1996; Papanikolaou 2003; Prodromou 2005) and there is an edited volume on the role that EO will play for civil society and modernization in Russia (Marsh 2004). There are almost no academic theses on EO and the social sciences in English.¹¹ There are series of collected essays bringing Orthodox thought to the public (Papanikolaou and Prodromou 2008), but tend to be classics recycled from thinkers like Staniloae or Berdyaev (Witte and Alexander 2007). Notably however, Archbishop Anastasias of Albania has written profoundly about Orthodoxy and development (Anastasios 2003) which will be mentioned in due course. Stanley Harakas has collected important, but dated social concern statements (Harakas 1979; Harakas 1983; Harakas 1989) and works overlapping with human development, as has Paul Evdokimov (Evdokimov 2001). This thesis has not sought to incorporate the modern Russians such as Bukharev, Soloviev, and Bulgakov due to the complexity of their thought (Valliere 2000; Payne and Marsh 2009).

The primary texts for EO are those of Dumitru Staniloae, with support from many other modern and ancient Orthodox thinkers. Some of Staniloae’s untranslated works have been employed where they bear on the argument; fortunately, his five volume *Dogmatics* was recently completed in English (Staniloae 2011; 2012; 2012). His magisterial *Orthodox*

⁹ One noted Muslim scholar noted that Orthodoxy “has formulated some of the most profound religious responses to the environmental crisis in recent years” (Nasr 1996, p. 201).

¹⁰ Perhaps contrary to expectations, Orthodox thinkers do not agree among themselves. Some declaim human rights as “inhuman” (Yannaras 2002), while most defend them. It is often the philosophical basis for rights, and the dissociation from responsibilities, that is more frequently questioned, not rights themselves.

¹¹ A conversation with Bishop Kallistos Ware of Oxford in June of 2011 revealed knowledge of only one PhD thesis in the UK. The one mentioned was an investigation of the primarily monastic text, *Philokalia* in relation to well-being (Kadloubovsky and Palmer 1992; Cook 2010).

Spirituality (written after the *Dogmatics*) and several other major works exist in English including his newly translated work on the Holy Trinity (Staniloae 2012). There is a growing secondary literature on Staniloae that is extremely important as an entry into his thought (Bielawski 1997; Louth 1997; Rogobete 1997; Ica-Jr. 2000; Miller 2000; Bartos 2002; Rogobete 2002; Turcescu 2002; Manastireanu 2005; Neamtu 2006; Bordeianu 2011). Maximus the Confessor (580-662) is also frequently referenced as he is absolutely central to Orthodoxy—and is also a saint in the West. One important source has been the liturgical readings of the church calendar which include the lives of the saints.

In relation to the capabilities approach, there is an immense literature. This study employs most of the major texts of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum (the number two in the CA) and secondary literature where appropriate. There is an emerging literature on faith and development, and occasionally in relation to the capabilities approach that is important (Villa-Vicencio 1999-2000; Narayan 2000; Belshaw, Calderisi et al. 2001; Janis and Evans 2004; Skerker 2004; Thomas 2004; Alkire 2006; Marshall and Saanen 2007; Sagovsky 2008; Deneulin and Bano 2009; Deneulin and Rakodi 2011; James 2011). In terms of the CA applied to post-communist contexts, there is very little literature linking the two (UNDP 2006).

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this research, it is important to make clear the audience(s) this thesis is addressed to. This is a complex issue for reasons which can only become fully clear throughout the thesis, but the following comments can help. The *first*, and primary audience is theological. This thesis is an appreciative inquiry into DS through EO theological categories. A fundamental contention is that the insights of DS (i.e. poverty reduction) should play a greater part in all theological reflection because fidelity to the Second Great commandment demands this—more on this below. But there is the additional claim that EO merits attention precisely because it can *conceptualize* this

relationship between theology and human development perhaps better than has previously been the case in the West. The extensive comparison of virtues in Western theology with EO is the basis for suggesting this judgement.

There is however a *secondary* audience which is the “secular” field of DS. Many of the arguments aim to bring DS into a closer relationship with theology. This should not be viewed as an alien intrusion as DS is concerned with, for instance, questions of agency and thus sources of human motivation in geographical contexts where secular intuitions are not dominant.¹² An indirect claim made in this thesis is that, from a purely disciplinary point of view, religious understandings of human development should be included within DS, and have not been (Sumner 2006; Deneulin and Bano 2009). But there are also deeper arguments that concern the overlap, both historically and conceptually, between the moral concerns of DS and Christian theology.¹³ To illustrate this from a *historical* perspective, many instances are cited of the religious contribution to human development such as the non-secular emergence of human rights. In terms of the *conceptual* overlap, there are arguments for a more fruitful dialogue with a) theology in general, but also b) EO in particular. The contribution that religious faith can make to DS involves not just the motivational aspects that religion can bring in (this is indeed important),¹⁴ but more substantial questions about the very nature of human development itself. Therefore, in order to speak to the secular DS audience, a “phenomenological” (Taylor 1993, p. 212) methodology is employed whereby the actual practices and values operative in human development are examined, which, it will be argued, demand more than Amartya Sen’s

¹² If “a requirement on practical reasons [is] that they be capable of motivating us” (Korsgaard 1986, p. 11), then religious faith provides both the reasons and the motivation for action in many contexts.

¹³ It is beyond the scope of this study, but historically, DS emerges out of the Renaissance, “humanistic” side of Modernity. Byzantine Orthodoxy influenced *this* side more so than the Reformation side. It is well known among historians that the influx of Orthodox Greek scholars (e.g. Manuel Chrysoloras) and tradesmen (many of whom had a superior classical education than many *literati* in the West) spurred the Renaissance (Harris 2006).

¹⁴ Staniloae: “if we do not feel this imperative of the good acutely, we have no power to bring about our growth in the good” (Staniloae 2000, p. 182).

Enlightenment focus on individual freedoms. EO's picture of the human condition can arguably offer a more satisfying basis for human development, even on strictly social scientific terms. This thesis thus aims at two principal audiences: theological and development studies. This is a direct result of the meta-aspiration woven throughout and is that an awareness of the EO approach to theology, being different in key points than the Western,¹⁵ can catalyze a *rapprochement* between faith and humanistic development concerns.

A brief attempt will now be made to formally state the theological method involved, although this will be picked up in the next chapter. Theological method is a contested domain and is often concerned with establishing the "authority" or the "starting point" for inquiry: whether revelation, or the Church, or human experience or some hierarchy among these (Clinton 1995). Concerns for establishing lines of authority are, however, marginal in EO and a "from below" approach is used simultaneously with "from above". This is, again, "because creation plays a much more important role in Eastern than in Western theology" (Manastireanu 2005, p. 147). But even if one starts "from below", one must still ask, "*where* below", or more specifically, "with which academic fields"? One of the tasks of theological method is, in fact, clarifying the "relation to the disciplines which seem to stand nearest to it" (Macquarrie 1977, p. 33). This thesis argues that DS is the discipline that *should* be related to Christian theology precisely because of its *practical* nature (discussed in chapter two) and close relationship with the second great commandment. Christ's response to the teacher of the law who saw the importance of the second commandment applies to DS as a field of study: "You are not far from the kingdom of

¹⁵ A Protestant theologian notes: "Eastern anthropology differs from the West on nearly every point" (Maddox 1990, p. 34). The following is from a noted Catholic theologian: "In conclusion, on nearly every significant doctrinal point—theology of grace, theological anthropology, epistemological principles—the differences between East and West are decisive and probably irreconcilable" (LaCugna 1991, p. 198). This is undoubtedly an exaggeration, but an instructive one. EO, according to Kallistos Ware, stands much closer to Catholicism than Protestantism (Ware 1997).

God” (Mark 12:34). The methodology is thus close to what is known as “correlation”, but unlike Paul Tillich’s approach the correlation here is less with philosophical questions concerning Being (Tillich 1951; 1957) and more with practical rationality in the pursuit of well-being. Correlation means dialogue and thus DS has its wisdom and questions with which to address theology; *mutatis mutandis* theology has its wisdom and questions for DS. And if the “vindication of any particular method can only be found in the kind of theology to which it conduces” (Macquarrie 1977, p. 34), then the aim is simply to put people and especially the most vulnerable and their burdens back at the centre of theological reflection. The aim is a theological method that takes the Second Commandment as seriously as the first.

In concluding this introduction, it merits mention that this thesis is the very first to offer a detailed analysis of EO in relation to DS. This is important for while development discourse is often performed in the secure middle-range of the secular octave, most of the world still experiences life in the fuller ranges that stretch both higher up into Transcendence, and delve deeper into creation as mystery. Thus, to say that ‘The Glory of God is humanity fully alive’ may just mean every person experiencing well-being in every dimension. A greater understanding of the values shared between religious faith and development can allow moving beyond mere tactical cooperation on targeted issues towards deeper synergies and more effective strategies. Such harmonized action may be the only real hope human development has in becoming a reality.

2. JUSTIFYING THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN EO AND DS (METHODOLOGY)

A dialogue between Eastern Orthodoxy and development studies might seem odd to some, if not impossible to others. This chapter explores why a dialogue of this nature is not only *methodologically* possible, but theologically appropriate. This chapter will first delineate Orthodoxy's approach to natural theology and show that EO has always been comfortable engaging, and even requires the method of correlation (or dialogue) with wisdom from "the outside". The account will then show how the Trinity can bridge with human development in that it generates a theological anthropology involving three clear dimensions—persons, communion, and shared nature—which can be brought into dialogue with the social sciences/DS. It will then be hypothesized that these three dimensions correspond with and integrate three values operative, but in an inchoate fashion, in the human sciences: agency, solidarity, and structures—a correspondence which will be strengthened in further chapters. The argument will then examine the nature of DS and its concerns for multidimensional "change for the better", and show that this mirrors in a very precise way EO definitions of salvation. Finally, in order for dialogue to be possible from the secular side, a vigorous critique of the notion that Western liberalism is the unique basis for human development is offered. This chapter, while wide ranging in subject matter, is principally methodological: it aims to legitimate the dialogue between EO and DS to be developed in further chapters.

2.1 EO Natural Theology

Natural theology or law¹ recognizes an "overlap", a "between" (*dia*) of the "truth" (*logos*) understood by a religious tradition and that of general human experience. This is another

¹ As mentioned, Orthodoxy does not separate theology and ethics as does much Western theology (Guroian 1981). Thus these two terms, natural *theology* and natural *law*, can largely be used interchangeably because

way of expressing the notion that “grace” and “nature” overlap, a common expression in regard to EO. Natural theology (or law) allows the claim of “truth” (however defined) to be at least in principle available to everyone as a source of knowledge or inspiration not from “special” revelation *per se*. In the past, natural theology largely consisted of rational proofs for the existence of God as in Paley’s Watchmaker and the cosmological, ontological, and teleological arguments, considered to have been dismantled by Immanuel Kant. Recently, there has been a turn to probabilistic reasoning (Swinburne 1979; 1996) but faith under this type of natural theology is still justified through discursive or evidential reasoning processes. There is however another turn and that is towards the human subject. This approach is what John Macquarrie (writing from a Western viewpoint) called “new style” natural theology (Macquarrie 1977) that takes human experience as the primary datum (Macquarrie 1975).² The EO approach to natural theology emphasized here is similar: it includes rational claims but goes beyond them by emphasizing participation in communion and human development through love. Staniloae confirms this approach, which, however, is not new within EO:

We experience God through our fellow humans and in the love we have for them, or we test our experience of him by means of the fully responsible love we have for them ... we recognize Him as a source of supreme personal love who gives us strength to rise higher and higher in our love for one another (Staniloae 2000, p. 199).

Natural theology is thus more related to the human experience of responsible love, and through this one experiences or “knows” God. An even remotely adequate explication of EO natural theology is impossible without demonstrating that Orthodoxy views truth as emerging through virtuous action, how this action unlocks nature’s potentials, and that constant reflection upon the beneficial consequences of this serves as the basis for wisdom. This complex understanding is indeed hard to pin down in formal rules, and is undoubtedly

the Trinity (theology) is also the “law” or norm of existence. This will become fully clear below. For a fuller discussion of Staniloae and natural law, see (Rogobete 1997).

² As Catholic theologian Jacques Maritain puts it, “natural law dwells as an ideal order in the very being of all existing men” (Maritain 1951, p. 89).

why Orthodoxy is sometimes considered to have no conception of natural law (MacQuarrie 1967, p. 243). This, however, is simply a misunderstanding. Orthodoxy has a strong sense of nature's norms, but these are more dynamic and interface with human action. These themes will be continuously clarified throughout this thesis.

For now however, the aim is much more modest: it is to justify the interdisciplinary nature of this research project by showing the openness of EO towards knowledge from outside the presuppositions of faith. It is not yet trying to show the appropriateness or special relation of Orthodoxy to development studies but rather to show that EO has historically placed theological wisdom in a line of continuity, and not discontinuity, with "natural", nontheological, or philosophical knowledge.

Characteristic of the approach of the early Fathers, philosophy was the love of wisdom (*sophia*), and no matter where it was found, was nothing other than the discovery of God. So strong was the appropriation of classical learning by early Christians that Gregory of Nazianzus complained against the pagan emperor Julian who sought to break up the "alliance between Christianity and Classical Culture and to reclaim that culture for paganism" (Pelikan 1993, p. 11). Socrates and Heraclitus were viewed as "Christians before Christ" by Justin Martyr (Stevenson 1987, p. 61); Stoicism was viewed largely positively; Plato's teaching on the immortality of the soul was viewed as divine. The Jewish Messiah, "Jesus the Christ" was understood as the Logos, the ordering and governing principle of creation, and this wisdom was not possessed exclusively by Christians.

This tradition of being open to nontheological knowledge is prior to, but can be seen perhaps most clearly in, the Cappadocian Fathers who have a normative status in EO. Basil the Great (330-379) notes:

We ... must first, if the glory of the good is to abide with us indelible for all time, be instructed by these outside means, and then we shall understand the sacred and mystical teachings (in Pelikan 1993, p. 27).

Notice the remarkable word “first”. This gives a certain priority to philosophy (“these outside means”) over, or at least temporally prior to, theology. Gregory of Nyssa identified “two ways of joining man to God: true doctrine and clear reasoning, both of which came from God and each of which needed the other to be complete” (Pelikan 1993, p. 187). Basil argued that there was a “natural rationality implanted in us, telling us to identify ourselves with the good and to avoid everything harmful” and “Paul teaches us nothing new, but only tightens the links of nature” (Pelikan 1993, p. 31). To bring this line of reasoning up to the present, Staniloae opens his *Dogmatics* with these lines:

The Orthodox Church makes no separation between natural and supernatural revelation. Natural revelation is known and understood fully in the light of supernatural revelation, or we might say that natural revelation is given and maintained by God continuously through his own divine act which is above nature (Staniloae 1994, p. 1).

This places revelation and human experience, theology and philosophy, in close proximity.³ Later it will be shown how supernatural revelation helps natural revelation be understood more fully, but the emphasis here is on how faith can, and even must be, informed by the “common apprehensions of humanity”. More concretely, some Greek (especially the philosophic and less the mythic/religious) notions were treated as natural

³ The EO view of *common grace* (or natural theology) is a beginning (even if dim) participation in genuinely religious truth. This is to be distinguished from many Protestant theologies that view common grace, and this includes “humans in their social relations”, merely as a way that sin is restrained (Berkouwer 1962, p. 179). This strong distinction between common and supernatural grace is necessary because, “Belief in common grace could be used as an excuse for softening the antithesis between a Christian world-and-life view and a non-Christian one” (Hoekema 1986, p. 199). EO is less concerned with maintaining this antithesis, and sees a deep continuity between common and salvific grace, in other words “humans in their social relations” and salvation itself in virtue of the Trinity. This will be developed later in this chapter.

theology and in turn served as presuppositions for Christian apologetics, ideas such as human immortality, divine transcendence, and cosmic teleology (Pelikan 1993, p. 185).⁴

Not all ideas from Greek philosophy (representing the best of human reasoning) were accepted, and some ideas once accepted were only later rejected, such as the Greek view of the radical superiority of soul over body. Unfortunate perhaps is Gregory Nazianzus's statement that "everyone with a spark of sense" is obliged to acknowledge "the flesh as less precious than the soul" (Pelikan 1993, p. 198). There is recognition of the lingering influence of negative Greek ideas concerning material existence (e.g. Plato's "the body is a tomb") on early Christian thought (Meyendorff 1979).

While some notions of Greek philosophy were accepted, others were immediately rejected and it is important to understand why. For example, the Greek notion of *tyche* (that life is governed fundamentally by chance or luck) was condemned as an error "inconsistent with common sense". Any philosophy that leads to doctrines of either *tyche* or *ananke* (the view that life is governed by an implacable necessity or determinism) was rejected. This is because these views diluted human agency and moral responsibility (Pelikan 1993, p. 314). *Tyche*, the idea that the events of life are outside one's control, is transformed through early Christianity into *telos*, the "longing after future prospects and reaching forward to the remaining possibilities" (Pelikan 1993, p. 153). *Ananke*, a sense of fatalism, is transformed into *eleutheria* or freedom, the belief that one can change and be also an agent of change. Centuries later the comic poet Dante Alighieri alludes to this Greek fatalism when Beatrice explains that people are actually not led about by the movement of the planets—as Plato's cosmology suggested.

⁴ Of course not all of the ancients were so optimistic. Tertullian, famous for the "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" question, argues that it was fitting that Thales, while looking up to the stars for guidance, fell into a well (Cochrane 1944, p. 244). Tertullian's scepticism was, however, more the exception than the rule.

All of this is to say that there was a positive, but critical relationship with Greek philosophical wisdom. Both philosophical and theological doctrines, like trees, are to be judged by their fruit, and their fruit is nothing other than their contribution to *arête* or the moral virtues. But *arête*, itself a classical concept meaning human excellence, was also in need of critical reinterpretation before it could be serviceable. *Arête*, from the same root as “aristos” or aristocrat, was used to denote specifically male nobility or excellence. Ordinary men have no *arête* (Jaeger 1939-44) just as ordinary men (and even less, women) have little access to the leisure that is required for the life of reflective contemplation—man’s highest *telos*. This aristocratic understanding of *arête* (and the related denial of the common person to participate in a life of reason and virtue) was democratized, as it were, under the influence of Christianity⁵—albeit admittedly this dynamic has never reached its full potential and there have been setbacks.⁶ As Augustine noted, truth and wisdom become “common goods” under Christianity, available in principle to all (Keys 2006, p. 67). Jesus is the true light “that gives light to everyone coming into the world” (John 1:9).⁷ This ancient achievement is of profound significance for widening the circle of human access to reason and virtue beyond the Classical conceptions that included only aristocratic males. This laid the moral and anthropological foundations for modern conceptions of

⁵ Alexis de Tocqueville expressed this in an unmatched way when he writes:

The deepest and most eclectic minds in Rome and Greece were unable to reach this most general and yet most simple of generalizations, that men were alike and that all of them had equal rights to freedom at birth. They expended great effort to prove that slavery was a feature of nature which would always exist. Furthermore, everything goes to show that those ancients who were slaves before becoming free, several of whom have bequeathed to us fine writings, themselves regarded slavery in the same light. All the great writers of antiquity belonged to the noble elite of teachers or at least they saw this noble elite come into being uncontested before their very eyes. Their minds, although broadened in several directions, were limited in this one and Jesus Christ had to come into the world to reveal that all members of the human race were similar and equal by nature (Tocqueville 2003, p. 505).

⁶ The influential Church Father Chrysostom believed that Adam’s sovereignty over creation included woman (Kelly 1978, p. 348).

⁷ Justin Martyr employs this hermeneutical perspective (that Christ extends the “logos” or access to the life of virtue to all) on John 1:9 in a section “The Light that Lighteth Every Man” where his influential discussion of “Spermatikos Logos” (Generative Reason) is discussed (Stevenson 1987, p. 62).

universal human dignity. It is surely not incidental that this happened under the influence of a religious doctrine that placed the Samaritan parable at the centre of its ethic.

The main point here is that EO (and Christianity in general), from its foundations, views philosophy or human experience positively. And there is the even stronger claim that human experience and reason are necessary to inform faith. Faith must be exercised in a critical, but positive, dialogue with human reason and experience for it to be authentic. Lest one think that this approach ceased with the Cappadocian Fathers who borrowed from Classical learning, Staniloae argued that modern thought has given new insights into the understanding of the person and relations *not given by the Fathers* (Staniloae 1994, p. xvii). This is a remarkable admission given the normative status of the early fathers in EO. This openness to modern insights is what Fr. Georges Florovsky called a “neopatristic synthesis”, a term which Kallistos Ware applies to Staniloae (Staniloae 1994, p. ix). This “neopatristic” approach not only looks back to the Fathers, but discerns God’s presence and activity through human agency, reflection, communion, and nature itself in every epoch (Valliere 2000). Staniloae was himself known to interface with existentialism (Rogobete 1997) and particularly Heidegger (Staniloae 2003, p. 116), depth psychology, the action philosophy of Maurice Blondel (Blondel 1984), and other frameworks. Not all Orthodox embrace this openness; some believe that faithfulness to the Tradition consists in repetition of past formulae (Vrame 2008). But it can be argued that this “fundamentalism” violates the very spirit of Orthodox Tradition understood as critical engagement with “the common apprehensions of humanity”. The early Fathers demonstrated this critical engagement *par excellence* and this is precisely why they are paradigmatic.

Staniloae furthers the theme of the continuity between natural and revealed theology, registering Maximus the Confessor's view:⁸

That is why Saint Maximus the Confessor does not posit an essential distinction between natural revelation and the supernatural or biblical one. According to him, this latter is only the embodying of the former in historical persons and actions (Staniloae 1994, p. 1).

This mention of *action* deserves comment in light of a class of criticisms concerning EO's allegedly "otherworldly" nature (MacQuarrie 1967, p. 243). EO is accused of being more concerned with abstract ontology than history or the Christian narrative. EO is accused of being "neoPlatonic" and captured by Greek philosophical categories of general "being" and not of "doing", and especially of giving insufficient attention to God's salvific acts in history. Adolf von Harnack famously argued that the Orthodox view of salvation was more influenced by Gnosticism than the Gospels (Russell 2004, p. 3). The respected mission scholar David Bosch ends his commentary on EO asserting that "The apocalyptic gospel ... was replaced by a timeless gospel ... [leading to an] almost exclusively otherworldly salvation" (Bosch 1992, p. 213).

Orthodoxy's alleged capitulation to Greek "timeless" categories is a misdiagnosis, but clarifying this accusation can helpfully illuminate Orthodoxy's intentions. If Orthodoxy displays a sometimes unattractive otherworldliness, it is not because of its translation of Biblical "apocalyptic" concepts into "Greek" timeless philosophical terms. This is not to say that EO has not been sometimes apathetic, or neglects social concerns;⁹ but other

⁸ Maximus is quoted generously in this thesis, but often from Staniloae's usage of him. According to Kallistos Ware, St. Maximus has had on Staniloae "an influence greater than that of any other patristic author" (Staniloae 1994, p. xiii). One merit of referencing Maximus is that he is considered a Saint in both East and West, thus his ideas, and the ideas in this study, can have a wider reach.

⁹ Though the focus here is on the ontological aspects, Staniloae and EO employ Biblical eschatological terminology. The issue that Bosch and others insufficiently grasp is that it is not primarily whether one employs a Biblical eschatology or a philosophical vocabulary *per se*, but the uses to which doctrines/ideas are put. Staniloae argues "No path towards eschatological perfection exists which bypasses life on earth and the struggles which accompany that life" and the whole point of all EO dogmas is to show "the value of human life on earth" (Staniloae 1980, p. 207). Here doctrines of eschatology, in fact all doctrines, are linked with human well-being. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was close to this when, in the preface to his doctoral

Christian traditions suffer similar neglects—and most did not have to live through Communism. Rather EO articulated its “philosophical approach” to relate salvation history to a philosophy of *practical activity*, and not to the “timeless” truths of Greek philosophy. In fact, EO intentionally placed practical reason (the sphere of action and change) prior to contemplative reason (the sphere of the unchanging)—thus reversing the priority of much Greek philosophy to bring it closer to the Biblical notion of love. Instead of a “timeless” understanding of Christian truth, EO’s “philosophical” focus can be understood as an attempt to translate past salvation history into a present day *philosophy* of action that is directly relevant for human development.

For Orthodoxy, Christianity is essentially “doing what He does” (Hopko 1976, p. 11) or the *imitation* (Russell 2004, p. 13)¹⁰ of the incarnate life of Christ who is the eternal Logos “in action”.¹¹ Salvation requires not just belief in Christ’s salvific actions on behalf of humanity in the past, but making present past divine actions in the world today. In other words, salvation or *theosis* involves human action today that imitates past Divine-human action which is termed *philanthropia*, or love of humankind. And the purpose of this past action made present is to liberate the person from anti-humanistic egoism, and bring about human well-being or “life to the full” (John 10:10).

If we act in the likeness of the God who is loving towards all, we act like men come to the highest point of their own realization, for our hearts are full of the most fervent love of all, God’s love (Staniloae 1994, p. 227).

dissertation, he wrote that the more he researched, “the more clearly has emerged the social intention of all the basic Christian concepts” (Bonhoeffer 2009, p. 21).

¹⁰ The term “imitation of Christ” can be misleading. To avoid the idea of imitating an external standard only by human effort, Staniloae emphasized participation in the life of Christ. This will be clarified more fully in chapter nine.

¹¹ Thus Jesus as Logos overcame the impassable gulf in Classical thought between “being” and “becoming” (Cochrane 1944, p. 259).

All of these themes will be expanded upon in later chapters. This chapter is concerned merely to elucidate Orthodoxy's understanding of natural theology as a basis for dialogue with non-theological wisdom. And this natural theology is concerned less with abstract truths and more concerned with the "truth" of compassion and *action* on behalf of human development. As will be seen, this is an especially important bridge, or correlation, with development studies.

Thus Bosch was not correct about Orthodoxy's concern for "timeless" truths, but his criticism was helpful in that it provided the opportunity to clear up a recurrent misunderstanding. Orthodox theology is indeed "mystical", and does employ "philosophy", but this is out of a desire to explore philanthropic *praxis* as a link between natural and supernatural theology. This view of "truth" gives rise to a different kind of natural theology, one that is less "scholastic" and more broadly about the human condition. This understanding is a signature strength of EO and will be the focus of later chapters when linked to the virtue tradition and practical reason. At this point however, Orthodoxy's view of natural law and its relation to action can receive further illumination by exploring the relationship of God's rationality to his personhood.

2.2 God as Supreme Reason and Person

Staniloae asserts that God is the Creator and ground of universal "reasons", that these reasons or "*logoi*" permeate all of creation (including material existence), and that humanity can in greater and lesser degrees perceive these. These reasons find their fulfilment in the ontological category of "person". Staniloae writes:

God is beyond discursive reason, but He isn't devoid of reason—He is the Supreme Reason (*Logos*), the Reason from which the reasons (*logoi*) of all things and the reason in our souls proceed (Staniloae 2003, p. 220).

Staniloae's natural theology can make better sense if several simultaneous dimensions are kept in mind. The first is that God and reality are *rational*, and God is thus said to be the Reason for the "reasons" which lie within things, but especially persons, which correspond in some way to God. Creation's "*logoi*" are that which makes things what they are, both in their particular, their relational, and their shared or universal qualities. These "*logoi*" are mediated by the Logos (who in Himself cannot be conceived apart from "relation" due to the Trinity), but permeate all of creation including the material realm. This presence of the *logoi* (or norms of existence) within creation explains the correspondence of internal reasons with those in external reality—a fact which has fascinated cosmologists throughout the ages (Greene 2000, p. 365). The Orthodox express this correspondence of interior reality with exterior by calling humanity a "Micro-cosmos", a term borrowed from the Stoics. This means that a miniature cosmos exists in every human and every element in the universe—mineral, biological, animal and spiritual—and is recapitulated in the human. These levels of Being and norms within creation are concentrated in humanity in which they are both constituted, but also transcended, in freedom. Further, this notion of *logos* explains the ability of humans to both discover and create shared meanings through science, language, and symbols. But the main point is that God is rational and creation partakes of that rationality, humanity expresses this as well, and this serves as a powerful basis for natural law. Staniloae paraphrases Maximus the Confessor:

Everything that God has done and everything that happens and is carried out according to His will, in other words what follows the true line of the development of creation, in totality or every fact in part, is rational, says Maximus (Staniloae 2003, p. 209).

Thus all of creation participates in this Divine reason. But it is important to note that this rationality is not "mechanical", static, or a timeless Newtonian vision, but is rather dynamic, process oriented and open-ended—and amenable to *human* intervention (Staniloae 2000). Humans have their role in both perceiving these *logoi* as given structures, but also in unlocking and even enhancing the various potentials or *logoi* of

existence. These points will be developed later, but Staniloae notes, “The human person, too, has his own part in creating himself; he is not created by God only” (Staniloae 2000, p. 44).

This points to the second aspect of Staniloae’s natural theology (and a point emphasized continuously by him) and is the importance of not conceptualizing the *summum bonum* of existence as an impersonal rational principle. The good of existence is not an abstract principle such as “beauty” or “justice” or “creativity” in a separate realm of existence beyond this world as in Platonism. Truths or values or principles are always “*enhypostasized*” or “personalized”; they can never be understood to exist apart from the ontological category of personality in all her particularity. Goodness or justice or compassion is not something that exists outside of and in a purer form than that found in concrete human persons acting in concrete contexts. As important as reason is, “there can be no transcending of the person” (Staniloae 1994, p. 28). While rationality is vigorously affirmed, rationality serves the realm of the personal, the highest category of existence and thus the highest expression of natural theology, and there rationality’s fulfilment or *telos* is achieved.¹² As will be seen in chapter seven, EO’s approach is similar, but not identical to a position known as “personalism” associated with, among others, Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier.

“The Holy Spirit must be a Person in order to make us grow as persons ourselves...” (Staniloae 1980, p. 75). This “personalism” protects the dignity and freedom of concrete human persons by affirming that the Divine Archetype towards which persons and history moves is not an impersonal force or principle (and therefore inferior and incapable of freedom), but in some way is “similar” and appropriate for humans, which is to say

¹² See (Rogobete 1997) for an extended exposition of God as “Supreme Personal Reality” in Staniloae.

personal. This will be investigated more fully in chapter three, but this principle was systematically violated in the case of Marxist inspired Communism: persons were subordinated to a “species rationality” and an impersonal historical process (“dialectical materialism”) viewed as the ultimate *arche* (principle) of existence. Stalin’s morbid, “you can’t have an omelet [social utopia] without breaking some eggs” [persons] expressed the tragic repudiation of the moral category of the person as the summit of existence. This category of the person safeguards the dignity of “individuals” in a mode analogous to the concerns of human rights.

But a third aspect of Staniloae’s natural theology must be added. Personalism is not quite enough as persons are not separate entities, but exist through and are constituted by concrete relationships. Thus another principle is required, and that is person-in-community. Human “autonomy” is a myth; or better stated, autonomy is itself a social construct requiring a “communal” plausibility structure (Berger and Luckmann 1989) to make sense of these claims. Humans are in many ways conditioned by and dependent on others and this is not to be seen as a failure, but rather this interdependence is freedom’s precondition and fulfilment. Within this realm, humans experience a longing for greater and richer forms of community, and this includes the realm of ethical obligation.

The principal point here is that the domain of natural theology in EO is related to human experience and is multidimensional: in the shared “logoi” that constitute the human essence or “nature”, in the freedom of persons and their irreducibility to nature, and in communion. EO in its approach to natural theology does not focus primarily on rational proofs, or evidence in creation external to the human person (though these can be included), but seeks clues within the totality of human experience, and especially communion, sentiments such as that of human dignity, and the related sense of ethical

obligation. It is in this manner that natural and supernatural revelation stand in an especially close relation in EO.

However, this positive view of human experience does not mean that theology cannot a) provide a more secure support for generally recognized claims, or b) add significantly to these views about the “nature of nature”. For example, concerning a), “human rights” depends on the sense of *sacredness*, the inviolable dignity of the human person and can be hard pressed to account for this value with secular reason alone (Perry 1989; Ignatieff 2000). Or, as another author put it, “what a secular-rational approach cannot accomplish is the most important thing: to give a reason for the absoluteness and universality of ethical obligation” (Dallmayr 2003, p. 424). Supernatural revelation can provide the absolute reasons in support of the forms of human reasoning that are found within the realm of natural revelation, but in a more diluted fashion. But concerning b): supernatural revelation can help natural revelation or human reason with fresh insights as well, as will be demonstrated in the doctrine of the Trinity.

2.3 Recovering “nature” in the Trinity and bridging with the social sciences

The Trinity as a “model” or structure for humanity has exploded in the theological literature over the last few decades and has been spurred in large part by interaction with the Eastern, “social”, view of the Trinity (Parker 1980; Moltmann 1981; Boff 1988; 1988; LaCugna 1991; Gunton 1993; 1993; Peters 1993; Thompson 1994; Gruchy 1995; Daniel F. Stramara 1998; Rahner 1998; Volf 1998; 1998; Purcell 1999; Fiddes 2000; Kilby 2000; Heim 2001; Powell 2003; Karkkainen 2004; Polkinghorne 2004; Turcescu 2005; Zizioulas 2006; Awad 2007; Jenson 2007; Beeley 2008). This literature is proceeding apace and there is no need to spend much time interacting with it. However, a few contributions are required for present purposes. First, some Trinitarian concepts and the associated

terminology are necessary to make sense of subsequent stages of the argument, for the Trinity is the foundation of all EO theology. Second, it is important to show how the Trinity itself serves as a basis for natural theology as Staniloae often employs a “from below” approach precisely in terms of this doctrine (Manastireanu 2005, p. 143). Third, important imbalances in pictures of the Trinity must be pointed out that are a result of the rush to embrace “relationality” over the category of “substantial” (Cunningham 1998, p. 26). These errors include how Staniloae is understood by some of his interpreters, but also are reflected in the wider literature on the Trinity.

Before addressing the question of the Trinity in relation to humanity, it should be noted that for EO the Trinity is reflected in the paradoxical unity and diversity that structures all of existence, and not only humanity: “The creation wrought by the Trinity must also be touched by the effects of this unity in diversity” (Staniloae 1994, p. 68). In ancient philosophy, this unity and diversity (how the sensible particulars participated in the universal forms) was an *aporia*, or condition of puzzlement, that Plato addressed in the *Parmenides* (Plato 1969). Staniloae argues that the Trinity is the mystery that makes all things intelligible, the mystery of unity and diversity (Staniloae 2005) that structures all of reality. If these *vestigial trinitatis* (vestiges of the Trinity) appear in non-human nature and are universally recognized (at least in principle), the same is true but on a more profound level for the community of human beings.

While the Trinity as a basis for theological anthropology was not clearly articulated in the Church Fathers, it became so over time.¹³ Staniloae assumes it even while he sounds apophatic warnings about humanity being but a “dim” model of the Divine image. The Trinity is the ground of humanity’s participation in, and aspirations toward, more profound experiences of communion. “Now these relations between human beings reflect in an

¹³ This was from a personal conversation with Bishop Kallistos Ware of Oxford in June, 2010.

obscure fashion the perfect relations which exist between the Persons of the Trinity” (Staniloae 1980, p. 36). The Trinity thus structures the content of natural law in that the community of human beings, being both unitary and diverse, are created in the image of a Tri-Unity. But the Trinity of course is an ideal order towards which humanity aspires: “In God there is a community of persons among whom love is manifest” (Staniloae 1994, p. 240) and as John Meyendorff notes about Staniloae, this becomes a basis not only for ecclesiology, but anthropology.

But what are the key features of this analogy between humans, modelled even if in a dim way, upon the Trinity? Often, Trinitarian anthropology is framed in terms of keeping a “balance” between two categories—the category of *person* and *communion*. For instance, a Romanian interpreter of Staniloae, Ion Ica, writes:

The key to Fr. Staniloae’s creative vision explaining his thought as well as his meditative style is the generous theme of ‘person and communion’ in their relational and dialogical unity as a ‘coincidentia oppositorum’ structure which provides an open, generous synthetic and balanced approach, avoiding the schematic overbidding of partial contrastive aspects (in Rogobete 1997, p. 29) (Ica-Jr. 2000).

This is very well put, but Ica fails to include a critical dimension, that of *shared nature*,¹⁴ in Staniloae’s consistently framed Trinitarian anthropology—and this is the dimension which guides humanity towards the *universal* human community and thus mitigates the dangers of “communitarian-ism”.¹⁵ This appears to be a common oversight not only in characterizing the features of Staniloae’s theological anthropology, but Trinitarian discussions in general. Shared nature is elided.¹⁶

¹⁴ Staniloae did summarize his theology at times as a theology of “person and communion” (Rogobete 1997), but this study argues that shared nature is necessary to give a proper picture of human development.

¹⁵ Communitarian thinking will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

¹⁶ Colin Gunton’s approach bears these traits, perhaps because he is influenced by Zizioulas (see footnote after next) who downplays nature (Gunton 1993, p. 214). An extensive literature review found no discussion of the moral implications, and usually not even an acknowledgement, of “nature”, as an important category in

Staniloae's Trinitarian "formula", is not just the category of *person* and the category of *communion*, but consistently includes a third category of *nature*. His "formula", and the proper EO Trinitarian one, involves three dimensions: *persons* in *communion* within the *medium of a shared nature*. The significance of this point for the entirety of this study can hardly be overestimated therefore several instances of Staniloae's three-part formula will be offered. Staniloae writes "hypostasis [person] cannot be understood emptied of nature, nor separated from relationship" (Staniloae 1994, p. 100); "There is a unity of human nature that needs to be made manifest in the unity (or better harmony) of human wills" (Staniloae 1994, p. 253). Or more simply "The person without communion is not person, while communion is conditioned by a common nature" (Staniloae 1994, p. 70). And finally, to seal this important point: "With respect to both knowledge and responsibility, human nature achieves endless progress within the infinitely varied relations that obtain among the many hypostases [persons] of the one nature" (Staniloae 2000, p. 97).¹⁷

The omission of shared nature in Trinitarian discussions is critical for a theology of human development because it explicitly serves as a powerful basis for universal or cosmopolitan ethical obligation. Shared nature also signals core human functions, or what Staniloae calls "the development of human powers ... or the full realization of human nature" (Staniloae 2003, p. 363).¹⁸ This three-part Trinitarian framework arises not as an invention from Staniloae, but from the classical definition of the Trinity itself, where there

the Trinity. Mirosław Volf mentions it in passing, but he chooses to focus only on person and communion (Volf 1998).

¹⁷ And thus even when Staniloae does not mention all three, he will sometimes mention just one in relation to nature as when he writes: "more or less close relations can certainly be established among all men on the basis of their common origin, and these relations rest ultimately on the basis of a common nature" (Staniloae 1980, p. 35).

¹⁸ Turcescu argues (against John Zizioulas) that it is a mistake to think that the early fathers downplayed shared nature over person (Turcescu 2002; Zizioulas 2002; Papanikolaou 2004; Zizioulas 2006; Awad 2007; Bates 2010). This debate is highly technical and cannot be assessed here, but it is fairly clear where Staniloae would lie given that shared human essence (nature) plays in his formulations. This study will provide many arguments for why nature should be more firmly included in conceptions of the person *both* for theology and the social sciences. This recognition however need not repudiate the fact that the category of person indeed has *some* priority over nature, as it indeed does in Orthodoxy (Meyendorff 1979, p. 184).

are not two, but three key dimensions: person (*hypostasis*), communion (*koinonia*), and shared nature (*ousia*).¹⁹ The Holy Trinity is “itself the structure of perfect communion” (Staniloae 1994, p. 67) and is based on these three elements and each category is constituted by the other. A theological anthropology claiming to be based on the Trinity, and not keeping all three of these in view, will ultimately be defective. And while all three have to be kept in view, the current trend in theology is to embrace relationality (*koinonia*),²⁰ and to neglect shared nature, and this, it will be argued at the end of this chapter, legitimates a view inimical to human development called “communitarianism”. One author writing on the Trinity notes: “Modern atheism was thus born of a wholesale neglect of the concrete narratives of the Christian faith” (Cunningham 1998, p. 25). This is only part of the story as another is when theology’s leading questions are not formulated in relation to the general experience of humankind and their pressing problems.

The closeness of supernatural and natural revelation in EO means that Trinity and creation, or these common apprehensions of humanity, can be more firmly linked. This can be further illustrated in that Trinitarian *theological* anthropology can readily be translated into *philosophical* or social scientific terms. Subsequent chapters in this study will endeavour to show that EO Trinitarian categories mirror, but also enhance and harmonize, fundamental concepts found in the social sciences. To this end, three terms will be

¹⁹ Patristic and Staniloae scholar Lucian Turcescu brings together the details that were already in place in the Cappadocian Trinitarian conceptions:

Gregory of Nyssa's *Ad Petrum* points to some factors that are essential for the understanding of the concept of divine persons: (1) The relation of the divine persons to the divine ousia is similar to the relation between the individual and the universal; (2) a divine person is understood as a unique collection of properties; (3) the divine persons are relational entities; (4) the main differences among the divine persons are that the Father is ungenerated, the Son is the only begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds forth from the Father; and (5) the divine persons are in a permanent and perfect communion with one another. This last factor makes them be living persons and not merely unique collections of properties. I should also add that, in contrast to a widespread, misinformed opinion of the twentieth century, the Cappadocians did not state a priority of the persons over the substance, but kept the two together in worshipping God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as in Basil's Ep. 236.6. (Turcescu 2005, p. 60).

²⁰ “If we had had to name a single issue on which recent Trinitarian theologians have achieved the greatest degree of consensus, we might well point to their collective enthusiasm for the category of ‘relationality’” over a “metaphysics of substance” (Cunningham 1998, p. 25).

analyzed: *agency*, *solidarity*, and *structures*. These are three of the most fundamental and debated concepts in the social sciences. For now, the key terms of EO Trinitarian anthropology will simply be aligned with these terms:

Person = Agency

Communion = Solidarity

Nature = Structures²¹

There is not a complete isomorphism, but the parallel is remarkable. Almost nowhere in theology or the social sciences are these three—agency, solidarity, and structures—combined in the way that Staniloae’s EO Trinitarian anthropology holds in mind and values simultaneously all three dimensions. Some theorists emphasize agency and solidarity as foundational values (Bhattacharyya 1995), while most have emphasize the agency-structure debate (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1979; Hays 1994; Imbroscio 1999; Deneulin 2008).²² It is important to note that the rest of this thesis will build on this tri-dimensional approach, testing its validity and extending its implications.²³ The hypothesis to be explored is that all three of these categories are required for conceptualizing the human person in the light of human development concerns, and a position called “communitarian cosmopolitanism” will be developed in chapter nine to reflect this. For now it is suggested that the Trinity as transcribed into philosophical anthropology is not an

²¹ This parallel merits a brief explanation. Nature and structures are both *external* (in the sense of environmental factors) but also *internal* to the human agent. This thesis will focus almost entirely on the structures internal to the agent, those “capabilities”, dimensions or functions that are universal and require activation for human well-being. Nussbaum’s “list” of valuable human functions/dimensions, outlined in Chapter 5 under “Being”, is a concrete example of this.

²² One brief exception from DS is Des Gasper, writing about the poverty of most social theories, asserts that “a range of personal, social, and species ‘programmes’ are at work” (Gasper 2004, p. 147). He does not develop this point however.

²³ Both secular approaches such as Amartya Sen’s will be queried, but perhaps more importantly, theological approaches will be analyzed especially in terms of the tendency to ignore shared human nature. Understanding the sweeping nature of the Trinitarian analysis throughout the entirety of this thesis can help the reader discern the reasons for the later critiques of Hauerwas, Barth, as well as the inclusion of thinkers such as Ricoeur.

imaginative construct which runs “foul of the facts and of actual life” (Aristotle 2004, p. 276) but rather gathers the disparate dimensions of human moral experience, recombines them, and illuminates them in fresh ways. As Basil said, revelation “only tightens the links of nature”.

At this juncture, it must be noted that this close relationship of revelation and human experience is possible because of EO’s anthropological optimism. Staniloae writes:

We look upon the man of today with this kind of confidence ... [because neither has man] become, by reason of the fall, such a totally corrupt human nature that his every thought and action and his whole being are completely sinful (Staniloae 1980, p. 216).²⁴

EO rejects the doctrine of original sin (preferring the term ancestral²⁵) and the “juridical” view of salvation built upon this; Staniloae actually calls it heresy (Staniloae 2000, p. 187). Related to this is EO’s rejection of the “common” grace and “saving” grace distinction whereby noble human endeavours are excluded from the economy of salvation.²⁶ For Staniloae, “Noble aspirations ... were implanted in our being” and while these aspirations are frustrated, humans are “not reconciled with this “minus,” this negative experience of what it actually is” (Staniloae 2000, p. 186). There *is* a break between God and creation,

²⁴ To confirm this point, another citation of Staniloae is offered:

Obviously, neither the good, nor the light, nor the connection to the source of enduring life have disappeared totally from creation's existence. The light has continued to shine in the darkness; the good continues to claim its rights before the conscience of men. Nor has the good given up the fight against evil. Goodness, friendship, noble aspirations, the hope for the immortality of the person—all these have remained like the rays of a sun that can never be totally covered over by the fleeting and ultimately rather insubstantial clouds of evil (Staniloae 2000, p. 286).

²⁵ Orthodoxy prefers the term “ancestral sin” to differentiate their understanding from Augustinian notions of “original sin”. Orthodoxy believes in a tendency towards sin, but they do not argue for an inherited guilt from Adam such that it serves as the grounds for eternal/Divine punishment.

²⁶ In Protestant theology, appeal is made to natural law (common grace) for *justitia civilis*, (just reward for labor, just polity, and so on) but this is categorically separated from redemption (Brunner 1939, p. 317; 1945, p. 14). This point is made absolutely clear by Alistair McGrath when talking about salvation as an “external” or “alien” righteousness (Luther’s term) that is imputed to the believer. This is related to the idea of “forensic justification”, of being *declared* righteous, a doctrine that separated the questions of justification (salvation proper) and sanctification (Christian growth including social ethics). McGrath notes that this separation was a “complete break with the teaching of the church up to that point”, breaking even with Augustine. McGrath also notes that this position was “taken up by virtually all the major reformers subsequently” (McGrath 1993, p. 108). Salvation is, in this framework, exclusively what God does, it can never be anything that human’s do such as development work.

but even after the fall, the “good continues to claim its rights before the conscience of men” (Staniloae 2000, p. 186). These claims of the good, especially a longing for greater communion and justice in the human community, are part of those desires for wholeness, for well-being, that are authentic movements towards salvation in the fullest sense of the word.

It is time now to introduce Orthodoxy’s dialogue partner, “development studies”. DS bears many of these noble aspirations and, as will be seen, is an expression of Trinitarian natural theology, and is evidence that authentic aspirations for the good have not entirely fallen from humanity’s view.

2.4 Development Studies: “Change for the Better”

Given that EO can be open to and even requires dialogue with wisdom from without, the question now is to explain the rationale for choosing development studies (hereafter DS) as *the* dialogue partner. This section will define the basic character of DS, and briefly point out potential points of synergy with EO, many of which will be fleshed out later in this thesis.

DS is a relatively new academic field and is not a branch of the social sciences *per se*, but an inter-disciplinary enterprise, gathering many different inputs from across the social sciences. DS emphasizes the multi-dimensional nature of development and rejects defining human development or well-being in primarily economic terms. DS is not value-neutral but has a “normative point of departure—to improve people’s lives” (Sumner 2006, p. 245) and thus an interest in practical intervention and policy relevance. DS is thus explicitly value-laden and seeks to conceptualize and catalyze “change for the better” (Slim 1995, p. 143), or “good change” (Chambers 2000, p. xiv). In terms of the present

dialogue, this moral core of DS is important because salvation in EO was defined as “change for the better” by the early Fathers. Salvation was “an approach toward and account of life that embraces everything, life in its entirety, in all its dimensions and meanings”. “Change for the good is the core of our Christian heritage” (Anastasios 2003, p. 155-56).²⁷

DS thus aims at “human development”,²⁸ but specifically on behalf of the poor. It analyzes local and global inequalities, particularly gender inequality, and is interested primarily in “less developed countries” including the former Soviet Union (Sumner 2006, p. 645). DS is not homogenous; there are a diversity of views including fundamental debate over the role of economic development in bringing about “change for the better”. DS has many analytical orientations: economic, sociological, anthropological, historical, and geographical (Peet and Hartwick 1999, p. 3).²⁹ However, in its shared focus on improving lives, and especially the poor, DS claims to be less concerned with elaboration of theory and more with removing barriers to development, and thus it has a problem-solving orientation.³⁰ While DS is explicitly normative and brings values front and centre into the human sciences, the relevance of universal laws to deal with complex and variable situations is questioned. As has already been mentioned and will be extensively developed later, this “practical reasoning” approach is fundamental to DS and an important point of

²⁷ EO shares the “therapeutic” or healing role that was once central to the human sciences in thinkers like Durkheim (Giddens 1986, p. 11), but is now being recovered in DS.

²⁸ Human Development, as mentioned, is a term used in many fields, not just DS. As will be seen especially in chapter four, Sen’s Capability Approach is a specific way of conceptualizing human development within the field of DS, with the complication that HD is often used as a synonym for Sen’s CA within the DS literature.

²⁹ It can be argued that three of the main intellectual drivers for DS, liberalism (with its focus on the individual), Marxism (with its focus on structures), and postmodernism (with its communitarian, relativist strain (Escobar 1995)) reflect this very Trinitarian structure.

³⁰ An expert on refugee and humanitarian crises writes, “Policy relevant scholarship might suggest approaches, but the issues are fundamentally managerial. ‘There are no disciplines’ ... ‘only problems’”, meaning that “there is no single answer, no single tool or even formula or combination of tools to deal with a particular situation” (Helton 2002, p. 16).

overlap with EO. Theory must emerge through a trial and error process through which wisdom is accrued.

Furthermore, DS is cosmopolitan in its moral horizons, and this can be seen especially in contrast to political philosophy. Political philosophy can ignore questions that development studies cannot—namely one’s cosmopolitan obligations (i.e. to humankind). If one studies the history of political philosophy from Aristotle to Machiavelli (Machiavelli 1979), through to Hobbes (Hobbes 2008) and on to Rousseau’s³¹ preference for civil/political religion over Christianity (Rousseau 2004, p. 148), it is clear that loyalties toward the *polis* or nation are paramount and the moral claims of humanity receive short shrift (Kant of course being a major exception³²). DS inverts this priority of the political and presupposes (but rarely provides adequate moral arguments for) universal values—the moral dignity of and obligation to each and every person in virtue of their humanity (Nussbaum 2000). This is consistent with the Samaritan perspective of Christianity and the moral obligations that “shared nature” provides within the Trinitarian philosophical anthropology.

But there is another role that shared nature plays besides a ground for universal concern (the *breadth* perspective), and this is where the insights of DS can be especially relevant

³¹ Rousseau (following Machiavelli) was one of the few who saw clearly the significance of Christianity in that it developed a loyalty to *humanity* and was therefore unreliable for shoring up political identity. “Jesus Christ is Lord” is often enough called a “political statement” in the context of the early church (Laeuchli 1967, p. 34), but its true significance is better understood as an explosive cosmo-political statement that incurred the wrath of the Emperors. It was a direct and provocative challenge to the absolute loyalty required by the Roman Emperor as Lord and the related refusal to take up arms and kill another human as one who is also a divine image-bearer. Thus, “Christ is Lord” was simultaneously loyalty to God, but—and this dimension is lacking in most accounts (Cunningham 1998, p. 53)—also a loyalty to humanity in general. These stand or fall together just as the two Great Commandments stand or fall together. It is plausible that the failure to recognize the significance and implications of “shared nature” in the Trinity are implicated in this.

³² But this exception itself is significant for the case being made here. Kant was clearly (even if one ultimately argues he was misguided by abstracting as he did from the concrete human case (Sherman 1997)), trying to provide a rational foundation for an ethic he believed was uniquely given in Christian revelation. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* he writes, “the moral teaching of the Gospel ... first brought all good conduct of man under the discipline of a duty clearly set before him” (Schneewind 1998, p. 545; Kant 2003). The Christian faith is at the heart of Enlightenment humanism, even though this is often denied (Hare 2002).

for theology. DS, besides assuming the breadth perspective, also seeks the *depth* perspective in the sense of discerning the various dimensions or functions that each and every human being needs to live well, or experience “well-being”, a comprehensive term in the social sciences (Charles 1999; Giri 2000; Deneulin 2006; Jaggar 2006; Deaton 2008; Bok 2010).³³ This includes a minimum uncontroversial set of basic needs (e.g. food, shelter, education) and corresponding human functions (e.g. digestion, reasonable comfort, literacy). In the 1990’s, an international consensus was reached on a broad set of eight targets, the Millennium Development Goals, which are now well known. However, beyond these basic needs development may include more controversial “comprehensive” goods that not everyone would agree upon, including religious dimensions. This is where disagreements will arise such as whether humans are naturally social, or naturally religious, what social sources of respect are valid, what are actually needs and what are merely wants, and other such questions. However, genuine advances in human development may very well depend on addressing these contested areas of what it *means* to be human. This is because humans are not just a concatenation of “whats”, a bundle of functions and needs strung together, but “persons”, self-aware “who-s” that live in and through questions about meaning, the “Why” questions.

However, for arguments sake, consider the following: even if all persons agreed on a minimum, uncontroversial, set of basic needs/functions, and religious faith had no unique contribution in terms of the “what is human development” question, this would not diminish the importance of faith in addressing the “why” of human development. The

³³ The following by an esteemed Catholic Trinitarian theologian show how “nature” in EO is linked not with an abstract idea, but with concrete human functions. “Concrete existence” below can be thought of as “conspecifics”, meaning specific, concrete dimensions of the human essence that are not abstractions, but shared features:

Those accustomed to Western thought patterns are likely to interpret *ousia* [nature] as abstract essence. For example, human nature indicates what is common to all human beings, but excludes every particularity ... In Cappadocian theology, however, *ousia* expresses concrete existence (LaCugna 1991, p. 69).

Orthodox philosopher Berdyaev noted: “Bread for myself is a material question. Bread for my neighbour is a spiritual one”. The question that faith brings to the table can be put simply: “Am I my brother’s keeper? And if so, on what basis?” This question is at the core of EO and all its dogmas. As the Archbishop of Albania argues: “Offering spontaneous, brotherly love to all our “neighbours” for no other reason than the simple fact that they are human beings, is acknowledged as Christianity’s quintessential message” (Anastasios 2003, p. 44). Similarly, John Chrysostom, perhaps the most widely respected Church Father wrote: "The most perfect rule of Christianity, its exact definition, its highest summit, is this: to seek what is for the benefit of all" (Ware 1998, p. 39). The promise of EO in relation to DS can be noted in that many lines of Christianity repudiate this “humanistic” understanding of the Christian faith. However, where this spiritual intuition (for Christianity, where the second commandment is the key to interpreting the first) is at the basis of religious faith, a powerful dialogue with DS is possible.

The aim of this chapter is primarily methodological and thus to show that a dialogue between EO and DS is epistemologically legitimate. However, one final obstacle needs to be cleared and that is freeing DS from an overdependence on Western philosophical liberalism. Read in terms of Staniloae’s Trinitarian theological anthropology, liberalism is defective because it conceptualizes the good of humans almost entirely in terms of freedom, which is but one fundamentally important dimension alongside both communion and shared nature. However, the next section will also show that liberalism’s nemesis, communitarianism, does not fare much better for similar reasons: an overreliance on the concept of community.

2.5 Transcending Liberalism (and Communitarianism)

Modern development theory is largely predicated on philosophical liberalism which emphasizes freedoms of the individual, the neutrality of the state, equality, reasoned public debate, and is secular in nature (Sandel 1982; Neal and Paris 1990; Avineri and de-Shalit 1992; Gauthier 1992; Gutmann 1992; Kymlicka 1992; Mulhall and Swift 1992; Bell 1993; Dees 1993; Walzer 1995; Rawls 2005). These values are considered recent in origin, emerging with the Enlightenment (Witte-Jr 2007).³⁴ The story of the rise of liberalism goes something like this: the ‘liberal’ (or Enlightenment) approach emerged out of the need to transcend the violent “passions” of religion and to replace these with the calm and peaceful ruminations of reason. This was no mere armchair intellectual project, but emerged out of the European Wars of Religion, “conducted with a fervour and brutality that were not to be exceeded until our own times” (Gillespie 2008, p. 129).³⁵ Enlightenment reason (liberalism) believed it could achieve distance from these passionate conflicts by abstracting from concrete communities and burdened historical situations by grounding political cooperation in reason, freedom, and public discussion.³⁶ The basis for social values then becomes not “ascriptive identities”³⁷ such as religion, or anything about persons empirically, but in the rights of individuals taken abstractly, i.e. apart from the particularities of concrete communities, history, or religion. In other words, when it comes to the bases for justice and human cooperation, “people should be regarded as distinct from

³⁴ Technically the Enlightenment as a historical period only arose in the nineteenth century, but the term is used here to refer to that modern cast of thought from at least the mid-seventeenth century with Descartes and Hobbes (Gillespie 2008, p. 257). The central idea is that human reason can provide at least the practical basis for truth and illuminate the way towards social improvements.

³⁵ According to conservative estimates, these wars claimed 10 percent of the population of England, 15 percent in France, 30 percent in Germany and more than 50 percent in Bohemia. European dead in World War II surpassed 10 percent of the population only in the USSR and Germany (Gillespie 2008, p. 130).

³⁶ Kant in his classic essay, ‘An Answer to the Question: “What is Enlightenment?”’ writes: “For enlightenment of this kind, all that is needed is *freedom*. And the freedom in question is the most innocuous form of all—freedom to make *public use* of one’s reason in all matters” (Kant 1991, p. 55). As will be seen, this parallels almost exactly Amartya Sen’s emphases, on freedom, reason, and public reason.

³⁷ An “ascriptive” identity is an identity that one did not choose, such as race, or gender, or being born into a religion. The fear is that people “identify with their own kind” and not on the basis of choice, which is thought to be contrary to the aims of democracy and universal human rights (Gutmann 2004, p. 127).

their particularity” (Mulhall and Swift 1992, p. 11). This (Kantian) Enlightenment universalism, rooted in a concern for moral equality, has been and continues to be championed as the most plausible basis for universal moral concern, human rights, and development more broadly (Sen 2000; 2005). Liberalism, founded on human reason and freedom, is indeed a profound moral vision that is supported by contemporary thinkers such as Ronald Dworkin (Dworkin 1978), John Rawls (Rawls 1971; 1999; 2005), Amartya Sen (Sen 1999; Sen 2000; Sen 2002; Sen 2006), Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum 1997), William Kymlicka (Kymlicka 1992; Kymlicka 1995) and many more.

However, the received wisdom about human rights and other such progressive ideals, that they emerged newborn from the womb of the Enlightenment,³⁸ is increasingly recognized as false (Wagar 1967). Indeed, one of the principal conceits of modernity is “to see itself as radically new and unprecedented” (Gillespie 2008, p. 19). Take for instance the very case of human rights. Religious freedoms in Europe were not engendered by the growing acceptance and implementation of liberal political concepts, but rather through a much more complex set of factors including political leaders’ interest based calculations (Gill 2008). Furthermore, there is clear evidence that the Reformers not only developed many of the leading concepts of rights but were among the first to implement them (Witte-Jr 2007). Even prior to the Reformation, the former colonizer turned Dominican Friar, Bartolome de las Casa, became a powerful advocate concerning the Spanish conquistadors’ atrocities against the Indians. “Las Casas was the first person in history to speak about human rights and the freedom of religion” (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 76). Similarly, the “dignity of the individual” was arguably a Christian achievement (Dumont 1982; Kolakowski 1990; Stroumsa 1990). The classical world tended to emphasize the species

³⁸ The notion that human rights’ origin was in the Enlightenment became widespread largely through the popularization of the ideas of Leo Strauss. Many conservative Protestants took on board this false idea, thus creating a wedge between Christianity and rights discourse (Witte-Jr 2007, p. 21).

(universal) or the *polis* over the person.³⁹ In a similar vein, *modern* notions of “progress” in the West owe much more to the doctrines of Cardinal John Henry Newman than perhaps anyone (Cowen and Shenton 1996, p. 9). Further examples will be offered throughout this thesis to scrutinise the alleged “liberal” (and Classical Greek) origins of the human development concerns.

More recently, the adequacy of liberalism as an account of the “considered convictions” about ordering society has come under attack by a group of scholars loosely and uneasily labelled *communitarian*. Charles Taylor, principal among them, styles Enlightenment liberalism as an “ideal of disengagement” that valorises “the ability to act on one’s own, without outside interference or subordination to outside authority” (Taylor 1985, p. 5).⁴⁰ Taylor’s incisive language represents a whole class of discontentment with liberalism (MacIntyre 1981; Sandel 1982; MacIntyre 1988; Perry 1989; Neal and Paris 1990; Etzioni 1993; 2004). Liberalism is profoundly individualistic⁴¹ and often suspicious of “ascriptive” group identities, including religion (Gutmann 2004). It is widely feared that liberalism, with its focus on negative rights and an ethic of non-interference, is generating cultures of mutual indifference (Glendon 1991; Tessman 2005, p. 99).

“Communitarians” on the other hand, emphasize the primacy of the particular, local context, and values and responsibilities rooted less in individual choice and more in one’s

³⁹ Hans Von Urs Balthasar writes: “This idea of the balance and reciprocity of universal and particular is perhaps the most important in the whole of Maximus’ thought. Here the old Greek suspicion of particularity, the exaggerated preference for the universal, is finally overcome”. He goes on to quote Maximus:

For if the universals are constituted by the particulars, it is utterly impossible that they could preserve the intelligible form of their existence and continuity in themselves if the singular were to disappear ... For the parts have their existence in the wholes, and the wholes exist in and are constituted by the parts (Balthasar 2003, p. 161-63).

But important here is that *both* the whole/species level (shared nature), and the individual (person) have “ontological” or moral status.

⁴⁰ The first paragraph of Kant’s “What is Enlightenment” argues that immaturity is self-incurred and is the “lack of resolution and courage to use it [reason] without the guidance of another” (Kant 1991, p. 54).

⁴¹ A more thorough examination of “liberalism” would show that just as there are “multiple modernities” (see below), there are “multiple liberalisms”; the libertarianism of a Robert Nozick (Nozick 1968; 1989) is a far cry from John Rawls’ “justice as fairness” (Rawls 1971; 1999; 2005) even if both are labelled “liberals.”

given communal identity. Communitarians insist (rightly) that “community is a structured precondition of human agency and selfhood” (Mulhall and Swift 1992, p. 122). The liberal position will be critiqued throughout this study, but it is important to note here that communitarians have their own difficulties in defining which community or communities, and which values within communities are given, or rather, *should* be given, priority. Moral relativism is a real danger with communitarian arguments. The communitarian problem can be expressed thuswise: if values are based in the *local* community, on what basis can distressing expressions, such as the Taliban, be critiqued? Liberalism has been deeply uncomfortable with this “localism” and thus grounds values primarily in freedom and reason. However, Aristotle himself argued that reason’s (*logos*) very purpose was to recognize those from “one’s own” *polis* and differentiate one’s own from members of other *poleis* (Aristotle 1999)—a very communitarian view of reason. These tensions give rise to the so called “liberal-communitarian” debate that is fundamental to political philosophy (Sandel 1982; Taylor 1985; Neal and Paris 1990; Gutmann 1992; Kymlicka 1992; Dees 1993; Humphrey 1993; Cecil and Taitte 1995; Walzer 1995; Fergusson 1998; Nussbaum 2000; Taylor 2004; Rawls 2005) but is also critical for development studies (Nussbaum 2000; Sen 2000; Deneulin 2002; Deneulin and Bano 2009).

How are persons to be conceptualized? Are human beings primarily individual, or communal, or perhaps better is to ask what *should* they be? The liberal-communitarian debate can seem intractable with many creative attempts to traverse between the competing claims of obligation to one’s community or the freedoms of the individual. Notable here is John Rawls, who arrived at a rather communitarian conclusion while starting from decidedly liberal premises (Mulhall and Swift 1992, p. xvii).⁴² Within this “liberal-

⁴² He does this by critiquing John Locke’s claim of *self-ownership* (Macpherson 1962; Locke 1980), which became over time the justification for almost unlimited accumulation of private property as justified by libertarianism (Nozick 1968; 1989). Rawls, however, argues that because the dispersion of talent is due almost entirely to a genetic lottery where some win and some lose apart from any personal merit, people’s

communitarian” debate one hears the call to balance between rights versus responsibilities (Glendon 1991; Etzioni 1993) or the individual and communal (Avineri and de-Shalit 1992). This binary, this thesis-antithesis can, however, be transcended with the inclusion of the third category of shared nature, which situates both individual agency, and communitarian obligations, within a moral horizon of *universal* human development. This is the case that will be developed in the next two chapters with Marxism and Sen’s capability approach. However, it is instructive that this parallels similarly oversimplified debates about the Trinity as a model for the human community (emphasizing only person and communion).

As mentioned above, liberalism is the dominant underpinning for development studies as will be illustrated with Amartya Sen. However, outside the West, liberalism is increasingly viewed as but one paradigm among many for justifying universal claims such as human rights (Pollis 2000; Witte-Jr 2007). Development studies, more so than Western political philosophy, must struggle to build on the “latent dynamism” (Goulet 1971) in each culture’s values. There is a profound and recognized need to explore other routes beyond liberalism, including religious values, to critically interact with and guide the valuational priorities of development studies (Cartier 1975; Gasper 2002; 2004; Rao and Walton 2004; Stewart 2005; Deneulin 2006; Gasper 2006; Jones 2008).

It is important to point out (and here the argument is directed primarily to the DS audience) that liberalism is, in fact, a weak basis for the moral project of human development. Liberal theorists have developed various and sometimes bizarre thought experiments through which the principles of justice can be derived from nothing external to persons, but only from individual choice. This means that individual choice requires very important

talents therefore become a species of common property. Individuals thus do not have exclusive rights to the fruit of their labours.

procedural safeguards. These safeguards “allow” an individual, or a group of conversing individuals, to reason or dialogue “properly” and thus transcend local or personal biases that might distort the principles of justice. However, these procedural conversations are highly artificial and involve carefully placed restraints that are utterly implausible. One famous example, pilloried by Michael Walzer, argues that the principles of justice can be secured through the device of a “conversation in a spaceship”.⁴³ Such conversations are just too abstract and artificial to be useful in the real world. As Walzer notes, “Proceduralist arguments won’t help us ... precisely because they are not differentiated by time and place; they are not properly circumstantial” (Walzer 1997, p. 3).

These idealized mechanisms for securing the principles of justice include Rawls’ “original position” (Rawls 1999), Habermas’ “ideal speech situation” (Habermas 1986), Sen’s “positional objectivity” (Sen 2009, p. 155-173),⁴⁴ Nagel’s “View from Nowhere” (Nagel 1986), Adam Smith’s “impartial spectator”, (Smith 2002), Peter Singer’s “point of view of the Universe” (Singer 1995, p. 230) and the list could go on.⁴⁵ All argue that their procedures allow agents to overcome moral arbitrariness and achieve the ethical/epistemological ideal of impartiality.⁴⁶ These are instances of “Ideal-Observer(s)”

⁴³ Michael Walzer is largely responsible for popularizing this epithet, but it was presented as an actual procedural mechanism in (Ackerman 1981). A group of persons on a spaceship arriving at the planet earth had to decide before landing the principles of just distribution amongst scarce resources and these in turn became the basis for a social contract.

⁴⁴ It is interesting that in this context Amartya Sen makes one of his few references to Jesus. He cites the Samaritan story but then goes on to say that the “main point of the story as told by Jesus is a reasoned rejection of the idea of a fixed neighbourhood” (Sen 2009, p. 171). This is not the main point of the story, but the sub-point. The main point is that care is to be exercised towards all. Sen’s point here is similar to the ancient Stoics, that citizenship does not matter. But this insight does not readily translate into a positive, proactive sense of care.

⁴⁵ Another approach to universalism derived from African philosophy is a unity rooted in humanity’s shared biological nature (Wiredu 1996). This approach is close to Orthodoxy in that it values creation or shared human nature as a universal norm, and not merely human choice in the abstract.

⁴⁶ It is not viewed as “arbitrary” that these proceduralist accounts, these “conversations in a spaceship”, the most developed of which is probably Habermas’ “ideal speech situation”, are openly acknowledged to be based on a situation which is factually and sociologically non-existent, and the theorist even denies categorically to exist. “He [Habermas] acknowledges that his expression “the ideal speech situation,” is misleading if it seems to suggest “a concrete form of life” (Hoy and McCarthy 1994, p. 159). Habermas is the most transparent about the weaknesses of such procedural approaches, acknowledging the need for

theories and by their very nature are highly formalized, abstract and artificial. And here it is vital to note that because of this procedure of abstraction, liberalism by its inner logic *suppresses particularity in favour of abstract universality*. This is a point that can appear counterintuitive as liberalism is said to promote freedoms of various sorts, but the very title of Amartya Sen's *Reason before Identity* (Sen 1999) vividly bears out how cultural difference can be suppressed by rationalism.

Given these weaknesses of liberalism, it can no longer be treated as the single persuasive theory that can ground development theory/practice. Furthermore, while modernization is indeed expanding apace, it does not appear to be inextricably linked with Western values such as secularism; there are “multiple modernities” (Sachsenmaier, Eisenstadt et al. 2002; Taylor 2004). Neither does globalism seem to be leading to a more cosmopolitan ethic and an increased sense of solidarity across national and ethnic boundaries. A sense of *anomie* may be increasing as the larger spaces of globalization are accelerating a turn inward to traditional identity groups—a “regionalization of meaning” may be occurring (Laidi 1998).

Yet, at the same time, traditional identity groups often display a deep concern for development values—this is not the exclusive province of liberal theory. This notion is lost on many liberal thinkers in their mis-characterization of “ascriptive” identity groups and their relevance or desire for a contribution to the common good.⁴⁷ There seems to be a deep *human* tendency to seek a unified basis for life amid the welter of diversity and difference.⁴⁸ Whether through a shared genetic substrate, or through a common genesis in a Creator, or through common rationality (Kant), or an awe-inspiring secular authority

further “background conditions” for his theory. It is significant that late in his career he began calling on the aid of religion if even in a limited sense (Habermas 2010).

⁴⁷ Recall Chrysostom's earlier defining the very essence of Christianity as caring for the good of all.

⁴⁸ One sees this tension in Aristotle where he discusses the virtues of man as such, or the virtues of man in relation to specific *poleis* (Aristotle 1999).

(Hobbes), or natality (Arendt), or death (Heidegger), there is a deep need for grounding *human* unity in meaningful narratives or some shared feature of the human constitution. Religious traditions share this tendency and there are various “humanisms” in every religion (Nasr 1996). The point being emphasized here is *not* that specific traditions regard their own idiosyncratic (narrative) world-view as the unique universal truth that everyone should submit to, and a unity achieved on this basis. Rather religious traditions may affirm truth *as* the unity of humanity, truth as working for the common good, truth as emerging in humble and uncoerced dialogue with others—and these as religious truths that are genuinely internal to human experience because creation is good. There can be “truth” internal to the human condition precisely because all humans participate in a shared *logos*, and for the religious faithful, God is the source of this shared *logos*. This is another way of describing *natural law* and some religious traditions place natural revelation and special revelation in rather close proximity—as does EO—and this has the potential to bring faith in a close relationship with development concerns.

Western Enlightenment based liberalism is neither the origin, nor can it correctly be viewed as the hegemonic carrier, of these “development” values. But by no means is liberalism entirely bankrupt and there are many noble features, and much to be learned from its leading figures like John Rawls and as will be seen, Amartya Sen.⁴⁹ This section has merely signalled the limitations of liberalism in order to clear the pathway for a genuine dialogue between faith and development.

⁴⁹ Recent scholarship has brought to light the religious origins of Rawls’ political philosophy (Rawls 2009). Joshua Cohen and Robert Nagel assert: “Those who have studied Rawls’s work, and even more, those who knew him personally, are aware of a deeply religious temperament that informed his life and writings, whatever may have been his beliefs” (Cohen and Nagel 2009). But important is that his beliefs were formed in the womb of direct theological influence as he studied theology and planned to enter seminary at an early stage in his life. This point is significant for this thesis because Amartya Sen, who is strictly a-religious, was deeply influenced by Rawls religiously influenced political philosophy.

With this recognition in place, the diverse findings of this chapter, which have aimed to legitimate this dialogue (or “correlation”) between EO and DS, can be restated. The bases for dialogue (from the Greek *dialogos*: *dia* meaning “between”, and *logos* meaning “reason”) are many. These include for EO a positive view of humanity’s shared rationality and experience, a less severe view of the Fall, and even in that most idiosyncratic dogmas of Christianity, the Trinity as a bridge with human development. Furthermore, the academic field of development studies, concerned as it is with all that goes into “change for the better” and especially for the marginalized, profoundly overlaps with EO definitions of salvation and the concerns within the second great commandment. Finally, in order to remove an impediment to this dialogue that will be continued in subsequent chapters, it was necessary to show that Enlightenment liberalism is not the exclusive carrier of human development values.

3. THE DIALOGUE IN CONTEXT: THEOLOGY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

This chapter will place the dialogue between EO and DS in the larger context of the already existing relationship between faith and the social sciences. This is important for the social sciences were constructed in relation, often agonically, to religion. This chapter will start with general reflections on theology and the social sciences, but quickly transition to a sustained interaction with Marxist thought for two very important but different reasons. First, Marxism is the theoretical background for Liberation Theology which is perhaps the most profound interaction between faith and the social sciences. Second, many Eastern Orthodox countries face development challenges which are a direct result of “Marxist inspired Communism”.¹ Analyzing these contextual factors is paramount for conceptualizing a theology of development relevant for Orthodox cultures. This chapter will examine these challenges in a way that demonstrates the relevance of the Trinitarian picture of the human condition for human development. This chapter paves the way to the next where Amartya Sen’s capability approach will be investigated in light of these findings.

3.1 Background Considerations

The social sciences and theology can conceivably interact in many ways.² John Milbank, an important Protestant theorist asserts that “the most important governing assumptions of [secular social] theory are bound up with the modification or the rejection of Orthodox Christian positions” (Milbank 1990, p. 1). The veracity of this statement is difficult to assess because there is very little consensus within the social sciences over terms like

¹ This phrase is used to prescind from the question of the precise relationship between theoretical Marxism and empirical Communist societies. This will be touched on later, but no definitive resolution is sought.

² For a helpful typology of five different strategies for relating theology and the social sciences, see (Roberts 2005, p. 373f). EO theology is not included.

agency, solidarity, structure (Giddens 1979; Hays 1994; Imbroscio 1999), and similarly, there is little consensus over the meaning and significance of theological terms. From an EO perspective, many Western “Orthodox” Christian positions that Enlightenment thinkers attacked have often appeared rather anti-humanist, denying value (grace) in nature, in human agency, and expressions of social solidarity. If “modernity’s” two values can be characterized as a regard for a) human life and b) freedom (Casanova 1994, p. 233), then a strong case can be made that Orthodoxy stands at least as close to these as Western theology, if not closer. This section will analyze the strained relationship between theology and the human sciences in the West,³ but it will also point out some obstacles within EO for a theology of human development.

Many of the Enlightenment criticisms were not against religion *per se*, but specific emphases. J.S. Mill famously reacted not against Christianity itself, but Calvinism. Mill criticizes:

this narrow theory of life, and ... the pinched and hidebound type of human character which it patronizes. Many persons, no doubt, sincerely think that human beings thus cramped and dwarfed are as their Maker designed them to be ... But if it be any part of religion to believe that man was made by a good Being, it is more consistent with that faith to believe, that this Being gave all human faculties that they might be cultivated and unfolded, not rooted out and consumed, and that he takes delight in every nearer approach made by his creatures to the ideal conception embodied in them (Mill 1991, p. 62).

The EO understanding developed in this thesis is very close to this form emerging from Aristotelian virtue language.⁴ Similarly, David Hume who critiqued religious faith in his

³ Richard Roberts has written extensively on the “problematic” relation between theology and the social sciences. “[S]uch has been the degree of cultural isolation of theology that the New Testament theologian Ernst Käsemann could write of the status of theological thought as a “nature reserve” in European culture. This is an apt but alarming image” (Roberts 2005, p. 373).

⁴ If the reader is incredulous at this early stage of the argument, the following is advanced from a standard Eastern Orthodox textbook. Christians are to advance, and notice the Aristotelian language, the “virtues ... which literally means those powers and possessions of the mind and the heart which all men should have if they are truly human, fulfilling themselves as created in the image and likeness of God” (Hopko 1976, p. 56).

Dialogues (Hume 1779 (1990)), was “in rebellion against the dour Scottish Presbyterianism of his childhood” (Gay 1966, p. 64).

Part of the discord between faith and reason is also that recent secular writers have tended to downplay or omit references to Christian inspiration that, in fact, were used by the great thinkers of the Enlightenment. Divine references by Kant, Locke and even back to (the claim to divine inspiration by) Socrates (Grube 1981), are often dismissed as “ironical”, or as irrational hangovers. Philosopher John Hare writes concerning Kant in particular, “This [downplaying of the divine] is an interpretive manoeuvre that twentieth century interpreters have also used in order to lessen the significance of Kant’s references to God’s role in human morality” (Hare 2002).⁵

Modern interpreters “cherry-pick” thinkers such as Kant, pulling ideas piecemeal out of their richer context and intent. Modern philosophy (and social science) which fails to recognize its theological roots is increasingly recognized as superficial (Marty 1980; Taylor 1989; 2004; Lilla 2007; Taylor 2007; Gillespie 2008) (Kilborne 1992; Wolterstorff 2010). But it is also true that the social sciences were built on the hypothesis of the universal decline of religion as societies advance (Stark and Bainbridge 1985). There were notable exceptions who challenged the secularization hypothesis such as Tocqueville and William James, but they were outliers.

However, the poor relationship between theology and the social sciences arises from deeper sources. Modern social sciences have often aspired to be “value-free” and achieve the epistemic certainty of the natural sciences where necessary and predictable truths

⁵ Hare insists that what is true of Kant “is also true of Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Leibniz, and even Hume” (Hare 2002, p. 2).

obtain with lawful regularity, regardless of context, history, or meaning (Toulmin 1990).⁶

The social sciences have indulged in what Bent Flyvbjerg calls “physics envy” (Flyvbjerg 2001), which has meant considerable abstraction and discounting of factors not fitting into scientific models—the “rational choice” theories of economics are but one case in point (Sen 1977; Petracca 1991). This has meant that the social sciences have typically given short shrift to action, internal questions of meaning, moral values (Levitt and Dubner 2005), history, and contextual considerations in preference for timeless truths, oversimplified motivations, in an attempt to model what “necessarily must be the case”.⁷

This epistemological ambition has (many argue) proven disastrous for the social sciences and unlike the natural sciences, in the social sciences there has been no real progression or accumulation of knowledge. In the social sciences, there is almost no methodological or even terminological consensus whatsoever (Kuhn 1970, p. viii). There are no Kuhnian “paradigm shifts” between periods of “normal science”; there are only “style changes” or fashion shifts (Flyvbjerg 2001, p. 30). The only widely accepted research program, the *secularization* thesis (that was central in the very rise of the social sciences), is now abandoned and with the same “uncritical haste” with which it was previously embraced (Bell 1971; Stark and Bainbridge 1985; Greeley 2003; Berger 2005; Martin 2005; Taylor 2007). The tide has turned such that sociologist José Casanova asks, as the very first sentence in his major work, “Who still believes in the myth of secularization?” (Casanova 1994, p. 11).

⁶ Charles Taylor notes: “The model for all explanation and understanding is the natural sciences which emerge out of the seventeenth-century revolution. But this offers us a neutral [value-free] universe: it has no place for intrinsic worth, or goals which make a claim on us” (Taylor 1993, p. 211) (Taylor 1995, p. 37-39). Or also, “Our personhood cannot be treated scientifically in exactly the same way we approach our organic being” (Taylor 1985, p. 3).

⁷ Reformed theologian Bob Goudzwaard argues that it was not Adam Smith, but Kant who laid the foundation for a value free science. Later it will be seen that Kant indeed, in the field of moral/practical reason privileged timeless “episteme” that is more appropriate for the natural sciences, over variable “phronesis” or wisdom that is more appropriate for the human sciences. Max Weber and Carl Menger, following him, “expel[led] from the field of the study of economics [notions] that contain a seed of uncertainty” (Goudzwaard and Lange 1995, p. 50).

However, a new but old approach, delineated by Aristotle but recast in modern form by Bent Flyvbjerg (Flyvbjerg 2001), argues that a rehabilitation of the social sciences is possible but only if it abandons its “physics envy”, that is, abandons its aspirations for the certainty obtaining in the natural sciences.⁸ As Aristotle argued, “it is the mark of the trained mind never to expect more precision in the treatment of any subject than the nature of that subject permits” (Aristotle 2004, p. 5). This rehabilitation of the social sciences is possible through a retrieval of Aristotle’s notion of *phronesis*, prudence or practical wisdom that seeks ethical guidance for action in specific situations concerning what is good and bad for man (Aristotle 2004, p. 4). This approach, a corollary of the virtue approach to ethics that will loom large in this thesis, aspires towards real knowledge about ethically appropriate behaviour in concrete situations. This social science tradition holds great possibility for positive interaction with theology provided theology can positively include human agency.

This is all to say that the social sciences are in a state of radical flux. From within this flux however, the lineaments of an improved dialogue between theology and the social sciences is emerging (Chatterji 1967; Wilber and Jameson 1980; Shepherd 1982; Matthews, Nagata et al. 1986; Lehmann 1990; Villa-Vicencio 1999-2000; Janis and Evans 2004; Thomas 2004; Haar and Ellis 2006; Lim and Putnam 2010). It is worth exploring whether a more positive relationship between faith and human reason is possible by adding new voices into the conversation, both from the social science side, but from the side of theology as well. Surely it is significant that “viewed from a historical standpoint, the shipwreck of faith and reason was strictly a western phenomenon. In the Christian East, there occurred no such

⁸ Others advocate this “phronetic” approach to the social sciences. Robert Bellah and colleagues’ *Habits of the Heart* is considered an exemplar (Bellah 1996) and has long offered insights in this regard (Bellah 1976; Bellah 1982). Charles Taylor has done much to rehabilitate this view (Taylor 1985; 1993; 1995) and others (Richardson 1994; MacIntyre 1999; Richardson 2002). Also, more directly in terms of development studies, is (Farmer 2003). As will be seen, this emphasis is also central to the capability approach.

result” (Bradshaw 2004, p. x). While this statement is perhaps an exaggeration, it can be taken to signal new possibilities for dialogue.

EO and the social sciences can, it will be seen, interact on many fronts, but there are also some potential roadblocks that must first be signalled. As will be developed later, Maximus the Confessor (and picked up by Staniloae) defines human “development” or salvation in terms of the movement from 1) *Being* to 2) *Well-being* and on finally to 3) *Eternal-being*. Social science could potentially interact with each of these categories, though obviously the latter only indirectly, such as the possible beneficial or negative effects of holding a belief in an afterlife. Ernest Becker received the Pulitzer Prize for showing how humans engage in heroic acts to transcend death through what he called “immortality projects” (Becker 1973). This “denial of death” is an underlying factor in the production of human culture (including oppression) and shows that the search for well-being beyond this life shapes actions within this one. This line of analysis could be attractive to a religious point of view that affirms the importance of life after death, or the yearning for infinity, a theme also employed by Blaise Pascal, Paul Ricoeur,⁹ and many others including Orthodox thinkers (Hopko 2007).

However, this emphasis on immortality can distort if it is the singular dimension as is sometimes the case in Orthodoxy. In an important essay entitled “The Meaning and Place of Death in an Orthodox Ethical Framework”, Perry Hamalis (in Papanikolaou and Prodromou 2008) argues that Orthodox theology needs to be viewed as *thanatomorphic*, as

⁹ In *Fallible Man* Ricoeur argues that there is a basic *disproportion* between the finite and the infinite dimensions of a human being (Ricoeur 1960). There is disproportion between finite and bounded *bios* and the infinite and unbounded *logos*. Later in his career he argues that this phenomenological reading of the human disproportion between the finite and the infinite is inadequate to explain radical evil, hence his “hermeneutical”, or interpretive turn in terms of methodology. This narrative approach will be picked up several times later in this thesis, but especially chapter nine.

having its leading concepts and questions *formed by death*.¹⁰ Many important insights are offered that are faithful to EO. However, the author deals exclusively with the question of mortality *per se*, that humans die and do not live forever, and, in turn, how Christ's resurrection is an answer to this need for Eternal-being. Important as this dimension is, it must be pointed out that it is tragically inadequate in dealing with the full reality of the phenomenon of death and the *qualitatively* different kinds of death humans' experience. When a grandmother lives a long, full life, has a quiver of grand-children and passes away in her eighties or nineties, one generally says she has "lived well", even though she dies. This is profoundly and scandalously different than a child whose life is blighted, whose powers of imagination never develop, who never experiences the joy of play or receives an education, and dies malnourished at an early age. And this happens for millions upon millions—and it is preventable. EO in fact is not orientated to death in only the way Hamalis depicts it. There is a genuinely *theological* notion of human well-being between the bookends of birth and death that must not be overlooked and needs retrieval. If death is "unnatural" as Orthodoxy affirms, then premature and unnecessary death is *doubly* unnatural.

A theological methodology that is one-sided, where theology is "calling the shots", can discourage reflection on an adequate range of issues and impoverish theology. This is where a dialogue with the social sciences in general, but especially development studies, is imperative. DS investigates the nature and causes of premature death and preventable morbidity, as well as many other analyses both empirical and speculative on what is good and bad for humans. Reflection on these contemporary concerns can help prevent distortions, enrich reflection, and help Christians take the second Great commandment as

¹⁰ John Zizioulas is another prominent EO theologian who seems to orientate soteriology almost exclusively to the overcoming of death as existential fact (Zizioulas 2002; Papanikolaou 2003; Zizioulas 2006). A theology of well-being or development would be difficult to construct on these lines.

seriously as they have taken the first. Indeed, this is not alien to Orthodoxy as some Orthodox authors argue for “the sovereign power of the second commandment” (Skobtsova 2005, p. 11).¹¹

This study is thus less concerned with death as existential fact, but primarily preventable morbidity and mortality, why a Japanese woman can expect to live to her 80’s and a Botswanan woman merely half of that. The approach here is concerned primarily with *remediable* impediments, or what Paul Farmer (borrowing from the Haitians) called “stupid deaths” (Farmer 2003, p. 144). The central issue is the relationship between Orthodox theology and *well-being* (Maximus’s middle category above) and the ability to fulfil various potentialities in this life—development now being regarded as a fundamental human right (Sengupta 2000). And neither does well-being have only to do with the remedying of obstacles, but is flourishing in its fullest sense, including subjective well-being. Though not coming from an academic source, the slogan of a British Christian charity captures perfectly the emphasis aimed at here: “*We believe in life before death*”.¹²

Gustavo Gutierrez writes, “In the final analysis poverty means death: unjust death, the premature death of the poor, physical death” (Nickoloff 1996, p. 144). The uncomfortable reality is that large percentages of the globe face structured risks for no fault of their own, whereby the absolute chances of dying from any number of diseases or dying in a “routine” automobile accident are scandalously higher than other contexts. To say death is premature and thus preventable, or that a life is stunted, implies developmental, and thus moral, norms in *nature* (Antony 2000). (Orthodoxy calls these developmental norms

¹¹ Saint Maria Skobtsova of Paris (called by some as the “Dorothy Day” of EO) complained about the *Philokalia* (Kadloubovsky and Palmer 1992), a devotional treasure of Orthodoxy, that “material about the attitude towards one’s neighbour takes up only two pages out of six hundred [in the first volume], and in the second volume, only three out of seven hundred and fifty” (Skobtsova 2005, p. 50).

¹² <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/> accessed March 16, 2008.

“logoi”, which will be detailed later.) And to say that “the death of *that* child was preventable” is to combine a fact with a value, it is to say that it should *not* have happened, and corrective action is required.

Unlike Kantian approaches that emphasize autonomy and formal reason and are suspicious of creation as a source of revelation or wisdom (Moltmann 1993), EO values “data” from within human experience and thus natural norms are a source of spiritual obligation. God has placed “rational norms of existence” within not only the human intellect, but material reality and developmental and relational processes as well. When these norms are not achieved, whether through intent or accident, a failure to achieve God’s purposes for well-being has occurred.

Facts imply values.¹³ This correlation can be straightforward or more complex where larger patterns can be observed through statistical analyses. For example, Florence Nightingale laboured to pioneer statistical methods to organize descriptive data into chains of causality. “Nightingale believed that statistics were a means of discerning the will of God”. She proved to a sceptical audience how improving low nursing standards could bring about palpable health benefits (Bornstein 2004). It is this combination of a) moral vision and thus quality of motivation and b) empirical analysis provided by the social sciences, that is sought after in this dialogue between religious faith and development. In EO, where grace operates through nature, these types of interrelations can readily be made, as further arguments will demonstrate.

¹³The strict separation of fact and value is seen by many as intellectually dishonest (Toulmin 1976; 1990). Hilary Putnam and Willard Quine have persuasively argued that this dichotomy can be transcended by “objective resolutions of problematical situations” (Putnam 2001, p. 156; 2004).

One main concern for any theology of development is the quality of insights provided by the social sciences (or DS) as an aid for achieving worthwhile well-being objectives. A famous example that Amartya Sen brought to light is that a serious famine has never occurred in a functioning democracy and this due to the effects of free press and other protective mechanisms such as free and fair elections (Sen 1981).¹⁴ In social science parlance, these subtle links are the realm of *explanation* versus mere *description*, explanation revealing something that could never (or not easily) have been discovered with the naked eye (Craib 1992, p. 13). These types of correlations or *structural* explanations are important and can offer strategic intervention points for moral/spiritual obligation that would otherwise go unnoticed.

However, *exterior* and “objective” social science analytics needs supplementing with a more *interior*, or subjective approach. There is another approach in the social sciences such that the drivers of change and history have to do with subjective and internal issues of meaning and purpose “causing” human action. This tradition is called the hermeneutical or interpretive approach, as opposed to the explanatory (Hollis 1994). To oversimplify somewhat, the exterior approach seeks to understand *what* happened; the interior or hermeneutical approach seeks to understand *why*. This, as will be seen, often involves “narrative”, or making sense of one’s life as a story (Taylor 1989, p. 47). These two opposite traditions can, if extreme versions are excluded, be complementary.

Emphasizing this complementarity is important because there is a move towards the interpretive or hermeneutical approach in development studies which is praiseworthy (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011). But going entirely in that direction and ignoring the

¹⁴ This does not mean that “functioning democracies” may well not have played roles in tragedies outside their borders. Democracy in its Athenian foundations was proudly and aggressively imperialistic (Galpin 1983).

positivistic (exterior/objective) altogether, the realm of nature or structures, can create problems. The positivistic approach can, and must, serve as a feedback mechanism for the effect of religious values and practices on well-being. For instance, one can imagine many traditional (or modern) practices that make perfect internal sense to the religious adherent or community, yet are positively disastrous. A recent case in the US illustrates this. A “parent-centred”, strict scheduled feeding program for infants became popular and claimed to be *the* “Biblical” view, based on the notion that humans are depraved from birth. Babies will cry and manipulate, but parents must not “give in”—so mothers were enjoined to keep their infants on a strict, “Biblical”, feeding regime. It was only after a nationwide pandemic of dehydrated and low birth weight infants eventuated that this tragedy was revealed. Scores of paediatricians interviewing mothers connected the dots, and discovered that mothers were feeding less and in turn not able to produce enough breast milk. Based on objective data (and no doubt because of the national scandal) the authors have amended their “godly parenting” texts (Cutrer 2001). This example is just to say that human nature, its *needs* (e.g. basic needs) and *functions* (e.g. capabilities) are uniform enough that “interpretive” practices producing ill-being can be discerned.¹⁵ This may appear quite obvious but in the flush of interest in the hermeneutical, a role, even if chastened in the light of postmodernist critiques, should be allowed for positivistic science or what can be called the norms of nature.

Understanding both of these approaches to the social sciences, the internal and external, is also important to grasp the ideas and legacy of one of the founding fathers of the social sciences, Karl Marx. Marxist thought will be investigated now for two important reasons. First, Marxism provided the analytical basis for perhaps the most profound interaction between theology and the social sciences: liberation theology. Second, and even more

¹⁵ This is exactly the role that Nussbaum argues her list of universal dimensions can play vis-à-vis family and religion in terms of a protection against abuses of basic human functioning (Nussbaum 2000).

importantly for this thesis, understanding Marxist theory is necessary to gain insight into the challenges facing most EO cultures. Indeed, the downplaying of internal causes and human action, in favour of a strong structuralist approach, was instrumental in the collapse of the largest social science experiment ever attempted in the history of humanity.

3.2 The Marxist Precedent

As is well known, Marxism has presented great promise in theory but tremendous perils in practice. Liberation Theologians in the Latin American context boldly enlisted Marxism in their search for answers regarding questions of extreme poverty and entrenched injustice. But it is the historical tragedy of Marxist inspired Communism in the former Soviet Union and satellite states that provokes the question of whether a theology of development must be constructed on a better basis than Marxism. The question that this section will be driving towards is not merely that of finding a “better” social science or development framework than Marxism, but rather one that can help interpret and address the very damage left by a failed social science experiment. Thus a question this chapter is preparing and will be addressed directly in the next is the capacity of Amartya Sen’s capability approach (CA) to interpret and provide recommendations for the Communist legacy. This is vital to assessing the viability of the CA as a broad based development theory, given the global impact of Communism. Indeed, in 1977, 32% of the world’s population, or about 1.4 billion persons lived under *consolidated* (full blown) communism (Kornai 1992, p. 391). And within these contexts, Orthodoxy’s voice is still important as Communism attempted but did little to eradicate religious belief (Greeley 2003).

The intention is thus to explore an alternative “liberation theology”, amenable to EO sensibilities, aware of and sensitive to the development challenges of these contexts (indeed, *phronesis* demands attention to context), but still employing a similar

methodology of partnering theology and the social sciences. As will be seen, fundamental is the question of cultivating “reliable agents” working towards “reliable success” in change for the better. As the virtue ethics scholar Linda Zagzebski has well written:

A kind, compassionate, generous, courageous or just person aims at making the world a certain way, and reliable success in making it that way is a condition for having the virtue in question. For this reason virtue requires knowledge, or at least awareness, of certain nonmoral facts about the world. The nature of morality involves not only wanting things, but being reliable agents for bringing those things about (Zagzebski 1996, p. 136).

This is a powerful *apologia* for development studies in relation to faith. It is now necessary to explore the “Liberation theologians”, who saw in Marxism a framework they believed would illuminate these “nonmoral facts” and live out more effectively the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world.

3.2.1 Liberation Theology

Undoubtedly, one of the most significant attempts to integrate religious faith with the social sciences is liberation theology, pioneered by Catholic theologians in Latin America, Gustavo Gutierrez being the acknowledged leader.¹⁶ Marxist concepts such as “class conflict” and “alienation” were mined to reveal *structural* injustices harming the poor, those on the “underside of history” (Nickoloff 1996, p. 216). Structural injustices are injustices that are not the product *per se* of one person’s greed, malice, or error, but rather are systems that force, often unconsciously, persons in directions against their own or others well-being. Marx contended that capitalism is inherently unjust and not only facilitates but necessitates the expropriation of the poor. It can be hard to detect structural sins, thus the insights of social science are called upon, which are not merely superficially descriptive but *explanatory* in a deeper, non-obvious sense. One example from Marxism

¹⁶ Other notables are Leonardo Boff of Brazil and Juan Luis Segundo of Uruguay.

would be the existence of a fundamental (even if unconscious) class conflict whereby the rich oppress the poor and the poor acquiesce in this oppression, legitimized through various legal and institutional arrangements—including religion. Recognition of this hidden dynamic, should, in turn, alter the behaviour of the Church from an elitist institution to one serving the poor.¹⁷ Following the teachings of Jesus the Liberator would be to exercise a preferential option for the poor, and to liberate persons and communities from injustices of all sorts: economic, political, and international. Minimally it would mean to exercise solidarity with and on behalf of the poor and vulnerable; maximally, outright revolution to overturn unjust structures, though not all advocated revolution. The following from Gutierrez summarizes these themes well, including class conflict:

But in the liberation approach sin is not considered as an individual, private, or merely interior reality—asserted just enough to necessitate a “spiritual” redemption which does not challenge the order in which we live ... there is a confrontation between social classes and, therefore, a struggle for liberation from oppressive structures which hinder man from living with dignity and assuming his own destiny (Gutierrez 1980, p. 174-5).

Redemption must be political and economic, and not merely personal. Apart from any specific insight of Marxism, what was attractive was philosophy or theology as *critical reflection upon action*.¹⁸ Marx wrote in “Theses on Feuerbach” that “The Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it” (Marx and Engels 1964, p. 72), which Gutierrez appropriated as “human action as the point of departure for all reflection”.¹⁹ Marxism was a captivating option, serving as a surrogate faith for those such as Nobel poet Andre Gide who felt that Christianity had failed him. “It was not through Marx, but through the Gospels, that Gide had reached Communism”

¹⁷ Casanova shows that this in fact happened in Brazil, beginning with the famous 1968 Medellin conference of Latin-American bishops that was really a recognition of what was already happening on the ground (Casanova 1994, p. 114-134).

¹⁸ Gutierrez (like Staniloae) utilized Maurice Blondel’s philosophy of action to depart “from an empty and fruitless spirituality” and move towards theology understood as “a critical reflection on action” (Gutierrez 1980, p. 9).

¹⁹ In a later work, Gutierrez kept this theme: “spirituality is following Jesus ... and reflection on the experience of following Jesus is the central theme of any solid theology” (Gutierrez 1984, p. 1).

(Crossman 2001, p. 173). The great existentialist philosopher Sartre said at one point, “Marxism, as the formal framework of all contemporary philosophical thought, cannot be superseded” (in Gutierrez 1980, p. 9). Sartre’s use of the “cannot” gives a sense of the hypnotic power Marxism commanded as a framework for social change. That an Existentialist thinker from a freedom oriented philosophical tradition could be captivated by Marxist “structuralism” and pay this type of public homage is remarkable indeed. Marx’s often confusing but scintillating diatribes had the moral fervour of an Old Testament prophet.

Gustavo Gutierrez and the liberation theologians argued that Marxism *qua* social science can provide insights not given, as it were, to the naked eye, in order to help close the gap between what *is* in the empirical world, and what *ought* to be in the Christian vision of equality and fraternity, embodied also in Marx’s “each according to their ability to each according to their need”.²⁰ The question of whether Marxism can be apprehended piecemeal was not lost on Gutierrez; he did not swallow it whole and employed other interpretive frameworks that were conceptually at odds with Marxist theory. Indeed, Gutierrez points out that Marxism was in tension with other competing and contradictory theories. However all were intended to help illuminate the situation of “structural injustice”, such as the distinctively Latin American “dependency theory” (Nickoloff 1996, p. 45). Gutierrez himself wrote in an essay titled “Theology and the Social Sciences”: “if there is a meeting, it is between theology and the social sciences, and not between theology and Marxist analysis, except to the extent that elements of the latter are found in the contemporary social sciences...” (Nickoloff 1996, p. 43). This was the methodological innovation of Liberation Theology, employing social science to aid in the struggle against oppression, to fulfil the Great commandments, rather than the uncritical adoption of any

²⁰ This expression is also found in Acts 4: 32-35 and describes the primitive and voluntary communism of the early Church, where all things were “held in common”.

particular Marxist notion. The aim is to follow this approach, *mutatis mutandis*, in this thesis linking EO with DS. However, key insights in DS emerged directly out of difficult lessons that history has taught due to Marxism.

3.2.2 Marxist inspired Communism

This section turns first to investigate Marxist theory and later to empirical Communism. The focus here on Marxist theory will explain its leading concepts beyond the previous discussion. Even if Communist practice deviated from Marxist theory in key respects, the development challenges are *not* unrelated to the effects of Marxist theory itself. Thus, what is termed “*Marxist inspired Communism*”²¹ can plausibly be viewed as an overwhelming international social science experiment, where many of the actors, or rather victims, had little or no choice to play in the matter. Indeed, this issue of reduced choice or “agency” has become a central theme in the social sciences and development (Giddens 1979; Bhattacharyya 1995; Deigh 1996; Imbroscio 1999; Drèze and Sen 2002; Ballet, Dubois et al. 2007). Understanding both the causes and the effects of this reduced agency in relation to Marxist theory is critical for making sense of the Communist legacy and conceptualizing a relevant approach for these contexts.

Interpreting Marxism is a delicate issue on many fronts. For instance there is the question of reconciling his earlier views with his later views, which is to say his early works containing his profound philosophical anthropology in the *1844 Manuscripts* (Marx and Engels 1988) which is based on human creativity, freedom, and a vision of the capable person, with the later development of historical materialism in *Das Capital*, which appears in many respects to deny or lose this selfsame freedom in the larger dialectic (structure) of

²¹ As mentioned above, this term is consciously employed to show the link between Marxist theory and empirical existence, but not equate the two.

history. There is also the contested relationship between pure Marxism, and empirical communism, and similarly, the “good Lenin, bad Stalin” thesis. Concerning the latter, some argue that Lenin was more or less true to Marxism, while Stalin corrupted it—which is now widely considered a distinction without a difference (Stephane Courtois et al 1999).

This section limits itself to describing a few aspects of Marxist theory that have given rise to the development challenges, especially in light of the fact that the stated intention of Marxism was to promote “the free play of humans’ physical and mental powers”. These can be described *inter alia* as diminished agency (apathy and learned helplessness) (Bhattacharyya 1995, p. 62), interpersonal mistrust (Badescu, Sum et al. 2004), depression, lack of civil society (Barndt 1999-2000; Eberly 2000; Havel 2000; Fukuyama 2001; Howard 2003; Badescu, Sum et al. 2004; UNODC 2008), lingering corruption (Miller, Grodeland et al. 2001; Karklins 2002; Los 2003; Sajo 2003; Gallagher 2005; Sandholtz and Taagepera 2005)—and an overall lack of social solidarity. One illustration can help identify the challenges. A widely employed and celebrated grassroots development framework is called Participatory Action Research, or PAR, associated with Robert Chambers (Nelson and Wright 1995; Chambers 2000). This involves community members getting together and discussing their shared concerns and seeking solutions. As one researcher put it about his work in Hungary, a context where “one would have thought that socialism was premised upon such solidarity”, “he was finding it very difficult to make the villagers come together and talk about their problems. The culture of sharing personal problems had been destroyed by ‘socialism’” (Rahman 1993, p. 227). “People’s self development” is compromised where adults have an ingrained “fear of offending the hierarchies by horizontal dialogue”. Understanding this dynamic of fear, and the related inability to work together, is vital to design development strategies where viewing persons as “adaptive agents” (i.e. Sen’s theory) is greeted with little success.

All of these concepts and others are important. However it is necessary here to focus primarily on diminished agency, or freedom, which links directly with the “structure-agency” debate. However, these other themes, and especially the importance of solidarity and shared nature or structures, will be picked up later.²²

There are tendencies toward diminished agency in Marxism even if Communism in empirical practice is distinguished from Marxism as ideal theory. It seems clear in Marxist theory that the focus on the *structural* transformation of economic relations (or relations of production) was conceived precisely to give space for the natural creativity of the individual “in whom his own realization exists as an inner necessity” (in Cowen and Shenton 1996, p. 149). Thus the structural focus was linked with a vision of creating the space for a very capable version of the person; the structural factors require transformation because these restrain or facilitate the flowering of distinctive human capacities. This is how the early (humanist and freedom oriented) and later (focusing on external economic structures) Marx might be reconciled. For Marx, what it means to be human as a “species-being” (he did not use the term human nature) is the capacity for changing one’s environment and then adjusting to and *altering* human nature to meet these new conditions, but less as individuals and rather for humanity as a whole, *qua* species. “Alienation” is that state whereby one’s relation with structures (relations of production) cut one off from the free exercise and development of human powers (Craib 1997, p. 89). Alienation means that one’s inner motivation is destroyed and external compulsion takes over. Capitalist alienation of course is in view with its commoditization of labour (commodity fetishism), the estrangement of the human person from the fruit (profit) of her work, the alienation of the producer from the product, and thus the human species from its

²² The explicit aim is to bring about the *combined* effect of the agency-solidarity-structure approach mentioned in chapter one on natural theology. Recall that this triad, emerging “bottom-up” as it were within a Trinitarian understanding of creation, parallels and was even *anticipated* by the person-communion-nature theological anthropology of Staniloae. The argument is that human development will be defectively conceptualized without this minimum complexity. This case will be made in this and the following chapter.

true nature which is defined in relation to meaningful work—*homo laborens*. The famous end of the Communist Manifesto is well-known: “The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of all countries, unite!” (Marx and Engels 1988).

Marx offered a powerful vision of mass liberation. Yet what in fact happened is that these hidden structural aspects became the basis for a superior *gnosis* of the few, the “vanguards of history”. Advancing the Dialectical Laws of History required a “socialist trusteeship”; those select persons who understand the true material nature of historical progress must *act on behalf of*, and often times against the explicit wishes of, the many, the *hoi polloi*.

This “trusteeship” was based on the conviction that Marxist materialism superseded first religion and then Hegelian idealism²³ by showing the true material and economic basis of humanism:

It is the task of history, therefore once the other-world of truth has vanished, to establish the truth of this world. The immediate task of philosophy, which is in the service of history, is to unmask human self-alienation in its secular form now that it has been unmasked in its sacred form (in Jones 1975, p. 190).

This Hegelian “progress of mind” that ignores the flesh, ignores the material conditions of existence, was superseded by what Marx understood as the *real* progress of humanism based not in abstract thought (representing all philosophy previously), but in *material* relations and history’s immanent drive towards development. Marx’s argument against the Hegelians was that they exercised “the art of converting real objective chains that exist outside me into merely ideal, merely subjective chains, existing merely in me and thus of converting all external sensuously perceptible struggles into pure struggles of thought” (in

²³ Marx considered that the alienation involved in religion had already been overthrown by Ludwig Feuerbach.

Cowen and Shenton 1996). Thus Marx's famous "turning Hegel on his head". The aim of this dialectical movement of history was thus to give free development to humans' natural capacities, including mental activity, for indeed humans are an absolute unity of mind and body. This aspect of Marxist theory is not that controversial, and indeed quite attractive. Again, the person as a moral agent was not conceived in Marxism to be passive in this process of the development of productive capacity, as the role of the active mind is to develop the immanent productive capacities of nature through work.

Yet, and this is the important point that must be returned to, in the "early stages" of the Communist revolution, history must necessarily be advanced by its trustees, by a "handful of chosen men" (Cowen and Shenton 1996, p. 135) who act *on behalf of others*—and even against the uninformed desires of the masses—"until theory itself becomes a material force when it has seized the masses" (in Jones 1975, p. 190). Persons must, to use the phrase of Rousseau, "be forced to be free" (Rousseau 2004, p. 53). It is the trustees that understand the true nature of the dialectic of history, including class conflict, that is, that truth must demonstrate itself, as Marx says, *ad hominem*, by being radical enough to boldly use force. However, whatever Marx's intentions in these matters, it is clear that empirical Communism never departed from the force and violence of the "early stages".²⁴ The coercion and terror which began in the early *war-time* "revolutionary-transitional phase" of early Communism never really ceased.

It is essential here to note that Marxism claimed to beat capitalism at its own game, and that was the arena of material productivity. By conquering scarcity, by transcending class conflicts, this would in turn unlock deep reservoirs of human potential and productivity by overcoming the alienation between labour and labourer which will occur when the means

²⁴ One noted scholar argues that Lenin knew "terror would be directly inscribed into the legal system" (Kolakowski 1990, p. 211).

of productivity are put back in the hands of the workers themselves. An extremely important corollary of Marxist materialism and his *philosophical anthropology* is that injustice and inequality are not moral categories as traditionally understood, but the epiphenomena or by-products of structural constraints induced by a lack of material provisions. Morality as traditionally conceived is bourgeois ideology, a form of false-consciousness bent on justifying the unjust status quo. According to Marxist thought, it is the scramble for scarce resources that produces and in turn justifies injustice, which is to say private property. Morality and an entire legal apparatus sanctions unjust, “bourgeois”, relations of production. This is no more clearly seen than in the arguments for private property and unlimited accumulation (and thus the basis for possessive individualism) so ably articulated by John Locke (Macpherson 1962; Locke 1980).

This philosophical anthropology is why Communism aimed so heavily at industrialization; morality would become otiose when the right “structural” or material conditions were in place. Equality and redistribution were only secondary values to production—this latter value was the *primary* reason for the enforced transfer of ownership of the means of production (the “expropriation of the expropriators”) under the belief that productivity would increase if workers were not alienated from their labour. This is also linked once again to the fundamental importance Marx gave to humans as labourers (“*workers* of the world unite”, not just the poor), which Hannah Arendt explores so forcefully (Arendt 1998).

This Marxist approach to human development was a “comprehensive” solution, encompassing all aspects of life (Kymlicka 1992, p. 161). Just as the ancients experimented with nature in order to promote solidarity among the *poleis* (and most notably Sparta), so Communists reoriented everything towards increasing productive capacity and accelerating the dialectic of historical development. This involved, *inter alia*,

the razing of peasant villages and rapid urbanization into the hastily erected and ramshackle block apartments. It also involved exercising reproductive control over women's bodies which meant the strict outlawing of birth control and abortion as well as coercing mothers into having more children—the reason for the glut of institutionalized children (orphans) that shocked the world after the revolutions of 1989. Both of these instances, forced urbanization and the institutionalization of children, were direct results of the drive to increase industrial productivity and build human capital.²⁵ Art and culture were subject to industrial propaganda—every bucolic scene in a painting required a factory blazing somewhere on the horizon. T.S. Eliot's adage "Communism aimed at a system so perfect that no one had to be good", despite its schematic flavour, is rather accurate as moral categories such as "goodness" would wither away when sufficient material human needs are met.

This discounting of the moral, subjective and agency aspect of humans, from which post-communist societies still suffer today, was not merely a product of "empirical communism", but rather is evident in Marxist "structuralist" theory and his willingness to employ force as an "argument". However, the exact nature of this structuralism merits further investigation.

3.2.3 Marxist Structuralism

In terms of one longstanding social science debate, Marxist theory itself (and not just the "aberration" of Communism) weighted a *structural* explanation over, and even at the expense of, an *agency* understanding of the person and change and social improvement

²⁵ The "orphans" were taken in by the State to increase human capital and therefore industrial production. This was their purpose and it was not viewed as terribly odd that these children should not have natural parents, and instead have a "direct" relationship with their real father, the State. Indeed, the very purpose of the *terror* and social atomization was to destroy horizontal relationships and create a sense of absolute, direct dependence on the Party.

(Hollis 1994; Smith and Seward 2009, p. 221). For a “structuralist”, structural issues are the true causal factors, while individual freedom, subjective consciousness or personal values, are by and large effects or by-products—events happen “independent of their will”, despite what persons may subjectively think is actually going on. Marx states this in an unequivocal form which deserves quotation in full:

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of productions constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness (Marx 1977 (1859), Preface).

This is *hyper* structuralism. External change in this ontology is much deeper than the agent’s awareness which is irrelevant, an epiphenomenon of the “real foundation” which is the economic structure of society and the “conflicts” or dialectic involved. Structures of economic production and their relations are the determining conditions which in turn give rise to political superstructures and forms of subjective consciousness—and thus causality runs in the direction of material to the mental/moral, the latter being but secondary effects.

Yet, not only would morality and legality itself be unnecessary once humanity has *arrived* at the ideal classless society, a proposition that is understandable if the Marxist view of human nature is accepted. However, morality and legality were set aside on the journey to the ideal society—led by the vanguards who have comprehended the above truths and exercise the conviction and violence required to bring it about. This requires *power*, which was the primary attribute of the social system. “One purpose for which the power is needed is to force people against their own will to adopt a way of life that eventually will lead to their own good” (Kornai 1992, pp. 88-9). It is easy to see here how the amoral ends are carried over into the means: if the requirements of morality are not part of the

ultimate vision of a society and if the ultimate aims will be achieved when adequate production is achieved, then it is rather easy and understandable to justify the revolutionary fervour that trampled cultural and social values and institutions that stood in the way. Here however, the disjunction between Marxist theory and Communist practice in Bolshevism is important to note: Marx believed that true socialism *must* follow advanced industrialism and must flow out of the internal contradictions generated by the *later* stages of capitalism; it is going against the grain of dialectical history to have forced the revolutions on agrarian and peasant economies as was the case in the Bolshevik revolution.²⁶ So in a certain sense, it is true that Communism betrayed aspects of Marxist theory by not respecting the dialectical stages. Communism *should* have taken root in England and the United States, the most advanced industrial states. This understanding of the dialectical stages of history is why industrialization was “rushed” in peasant societies such as Russia so that that they could “catch up” historically with Marx’s theory.

Besides the problems mentioned before such as apathy and the social legacy of mistrust, Communist societies were overrun by corruption.²⁷ “Communism created structural incentives for engaging in corrupt behaviours, which became such a widespread fact of life that they became rooted in the culture in these societies” (Sandholtz and Taagepera 2005). This merits further consideration as it bears directly upon present day development challenges.

²⁶ Marx’s view about human nature was, however, naive it seems in two inconsistent senses: a) Marx’s pessimism about capitalist man’s ability to display any capacity for reform. In fact, reforms were being made under Marx’s nose in England that he ignored which would ameliorate some of the class-tension such as child labour laws; b) his optimism concerning socialist man, that they could seize power and not be corrupted by it.

²⁷ Many argue that traditions of corruption predate Communism (Mestrovic 1993). At any rate, to take one recent example of its pervasiveness, for the energy sectors of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Bulgaria, Romania, and Kyrgyzstan suggest that theft accounts for up to thirty percent of total electricity sales. This compromises infrastructure development even effecting delivery of services itself (Ruth 2005, p. 120).

The official “command economy” under Communism was so dysfunctional (this will be more fully explained in the next section) that without the underground economy people would have starved. In capitalist economies, the “seller” tries to corrupt the “buyer”, meaning that the seller faces competition and must somehow win the buyers loyalty. But in Communism, because there was no competition and there were constant shortages, the “buyer” was forced to bribe the seller to provide terrible services, often given in a condescending manner (Kornai 1992, p. 454). Because there was no competition, there was no spurring of the producer to innovate or improve product quality, or even be sensitive to the needs (much less the wants) of the “buyer” (the entire population). Furthermore, the whole concentration of power in Communism meant that the means for extortion were never far from hand. “Officials have an incentive to create unnecessary problems ... to maintain the conditions for bribery”. Corruption meant brutalities to the very poor that have no means to pay bribes (Miller, Grodeland et al. 2001, p. 13). Stealing from one’s work and then selling these items on the “black” market often meant the difference between life and death.

Another feature that consolidated corruption was that ruthless and uninhibited forms of leadership quickly rose to the top (c.f. Marx’s *ad hominem* argument). In Communism, there are few if any accountability mechanisms: “the unscrupulous and uninhibited are likely to be more successful in a society tending towards totalitarianism” (Hayek 1974) and this contributes to the rise of “authoritarian personalities” (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik et al. 1982). Bribery is used to soften the sharp edges of totalitarian power. But the pervasive nature of these features meant that the system itself was broken and corruption became thoroughly entrenched. This structural nature of corruption means not so much that persons were more evil and abusive (though the system did pervert moral character), but “the system was found unworkable unless fraud and deception were allowed on a vast scale” (Miller, Grodeland et al. 2001, p. 14).

The result is that a “plausibility structure” (Berger and Luckmann 1989) or “social imaginary” (Taylor 2004) for corruption was created that deforms the exercise of agency and legitimates the “violation of established rules for personal gain and profit” (Sen 1999, p. 275).²⁸ Corruption can be perceived as normal and necessary—i.e. part of the culture and the State’s apparatus (Los 2003; Sajo 2003). Corruption most simply is where “take” becomes more plausible than “make” (Olson 2000) and “socially unproductive, but personally lucrative activities” are normalized (Klitgaard 1991, p. 44).²⁹ Agency or human action in such a context can become cynicism, or pulled in directions not benefitting the common good. In such contexts where politics itself is corrupted, an increase in, for example, political activity by youth can actually consolidate corruption (Robertson 2009).

Reducing corruption is a major global challenge. There are certain technical issues that policy-makers and citizens can be involved with that play an important role that are fairly well understood. These involve limiting discretionary powers of local bureaucrats, making information public, ensuring property rights (Soto 2000), public vigilance, etc. But even though some of these issues might be straightforward, identifying the solutions are the easy challenges; the incredible difficulty of implementing them in contexts of resistance and entrenched interests is why corruption is so durable. According to Mancur Olson, while corruption hurts everyone, the small elite group who benefit from it gain much more per

²⁸ Most definitions of corruption, such as that of Transparency International, the World Bank and the IMF focus more on the institutional or public aspects than the definition provided above by Amartya Sen. Sen’s definition may be aiming at the “private corruption” that occurs within the non-public domain of the family, and is a major source of ill-being. This is important because of the scaling effect of the family as a basic institution in society. See also (Noonan 1987; Klitgaard 1991; Karklins 2002).

²⁹ Corruption is widely considered a, if not the, principal obstacle to development (Myrdal 1970; MacMullen 1988; Klitgaard 1991; Kaufmann 1997; Svensson 2005; Marshall 2008; UNODC 2008; Allaby 2013) and even distorts development organizations such as the World Bank (Giacomo 2004). Some argue that petty everyday corruption is the worst. This is because:

The real damage to society occurs when entire generations of youth are miseducated--by example--to believe that personal success comes not through merit and hard work but through favouritism, bribery, and fraud (Chapman 2005, p. 66).

capita than the large group stand to lose from it—per capita. Thus the corrupt few who command greater resources will apply more focused energy for its maintenance than the larger but dispersed group will be able to for its resistance (Olson 2000). Where corruption is entrenched, resistance can often be nothing more than a symbolic act.

But this symbolic act can be important for fighting corruption is about attitudes, creating a sense of disgust, that “something is wrong when great wealth coexists with squalor ... something is wrong in societies when corruption takes over (Klitgaard 1991, p. 210). Some cultures or groups within cultures do, in fact, manage to resist and fight corruption better than others. Some societies do reach the “tipping point” where corruption does not dominate almost every layer. This would seem to lead back to the interpretive approach that tries to get “inside” both individuals and groups to answer these types of questions. Max Weber argued that “Without adequacy at the level of meaning, our generalizations remain mere statements of statistical probability, either not intelligible at all or imperfectly intelligible” (in Hollis 1994, p. 183). Thus while many of the structural or enabling features of corruption are very well known, the internal power to resist it is much more mysterious.

A major question for development studies is under what conditions some individuals, groups, and societies do fight corruption even if fighting it appears irrational, which is to say that the likelihood of severe punishment is much higher than any possible benefits of resistance.³⁰ One well known answer is that where there is a pervasive sense of trust in the “generalized other”, this can reduce corruption, and where there are strong “in-groups”,

³⁰ If x risky action is done to expose or resist corruption, the almost certain outcome is getting fired, or worse. Also, one is completely unsure if the action will even make any tangible difference at all. Furthermore, the more corrupt the society, the higher the risk for resistance, and the less likely that any one person or action can make any discernible difference. There is a tremendous collective action problem here, which is helpfully analyzed by (Olson 1971). Fighting corruption requires a kind of mystical faith; it cannot be approached from a perspective of economic rationality.

this can facilitate corruption. But this seems oversimplified if one reflects on the conditions under which the strengths to fight corruption (at considerable cost!) can become operable in societies already permeated by corruption. This leads to the recognition that strong sub-group or “communitarian” identities are necessary to create a counter plausibility structure of meaning, norms, and social support. Thus, at least a partial solution can be religious communities taking a firm stance against corruption, because corruption is ultimately about values, and religion influences values.

For Orthodox cultures, this is one arena where the Church, given her prominence in her respective cultures, can truly make a difference. This prospect, however, is difficult when the Church exists in a privileged relationship with the state. There is however, no intrinsic reason why a stronger stance cannot be made given the high public trust of the Orthodox Church in many countries and recognizing that adopting a prophetic stance and speaking “truth to power” would further enhance the Church’s prestige (Marshall and Saanen 2007).³¹ While the empirical relationship between religion and corruption is ambiguous, religion has “the power of [shaping] discourse in creating a political community committed to an anticorruption agenda” (Marquette 2010, p. 22).

But back to the original (and admittedly limited) problematic posed earlier within the social sciences: does the structure form the person, or the person the structure—or both? Of course many, if not most, social theorists now view this dichotomy between agency and structure as a false problematic (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1979; Bandura 1986; Berger and Luckmann 1989; Bandura 1995). However, for societies under communism, one side of this problematic was imposed with disastrous consequences that require further investigation.

³¹ In Romania for example, the Orthodox Church is consistently voted the most trusted public institution (Stan and Turcescu 2000; Gallagher 2005).

3.3 The Communist Catastrophe

Marxist inspired Communism did not see much of a debate between structure and agency: human “individuals are puppets, controlled from offstage by the interplay of forces and relations of production” (Craib 1997, p. 6). Unfortunately, as is now well known, many of these Marxist “dialectical laws” of history (at least in terms of how they were put into actual practice) were simply fictitious and therefore *disastrous*. Entire societies were reengineered according to these fictive dialectics, these ideologically derived structures or “scientific” laws that were often completely disconnected from reality: Five-Year Plans, Golden-Ages, and Scientific Nourishment Programs,³² almost all of which debased not only humans’ physical existence, but language, art and intellectual life. Science itself was viewed “dialectically”, which meant ideologically and thus was subject to arbitrary interventions.³³ One striking example was the Russian biologist Lysenko who employed the “dialectical method” of growing wheat more effectively, which eventuated in disastrous crop failures (Craib 1997, p. 206). Amartya Sen points out that the “Great Leap Forward” in China was actually a famine that killed close to thirty million people in one region precisely at a time when other areas were glutted with grain (Sen 1999, p. 181). These are not isolated examples and their pile-up is what precipitated the collapse of the empire. Communism aimed at destroying *all* previous structures: “Wherever it rose to power, it developed entirely new political institutions and destroyed all social, legal, and

³² This was a part of the continual perversion of language. This “Scientific Nourishment” program elaborated in 1982 by Iulian Mincu in Romania, “stipulated the number of calories and percentage of proteins allotted for every member of society-according to age, sex, and profession” (Treptow 1997, p. 550-551). In reality, these were barely above starvation rations.

³³ In Romania, admittedly an extreme case in terms of the Communist regime type, Ceausescu would make “working visits” and give “valuable advice”, which was dutifully implemented, but which “left managers and workers in a daze and merely had the opposite of the desired effect by increasing inefficiency” (Deletant 1998, p. 176). Scientific dissertations had to include a very high percentage of “scientific references” to Elena Ceausescu (the dictator Nicolae’s wife), who apparently did not even know the molecular formula of water.

political traditions of the country” (Arendt 1968, p. 158).³⁴ Persons literally lost contact with meaningful human experience for “ideological thinking ruins all relationships with reality” (Arendt 1968, p. 172). The new human nature, *homo sovieticus* took shape through propaganda; the dialectical (conflict) process was read everywhere, and in the spirit of Hegel who said, “so much for the facts”,³⁵ so in Communism when they do not agree with the dialectic of the system. One commentator notes:

The “engineers of human souls” were given a law on the basis of which to make their “judgements”. It rejected reality and truth and replaced them with a decision of the supreme authority as to what did and did not correspond to “reality in terms of its revolutionary advance” (Heller 1988, p. 217).

This Promethean view entailed *humanity’s triumph over nature*. But because many of the so called Marxist dialectics were chimerical, the “structure” that was in fact followed in Communist societies was no rational structure at all but sheer and unmitigated power—and this required fear. Hannah Arendt exposed with precision the “logic of terror” in the soviet style system and thus the *necessarily* pervasive role of the *gulags* or corrective labour camps (Arendt 1968). Perverse incentives were set up to induce betrayals even of friends and loved ones who spoke against or questioned the wisdom of the Party. The ideal citizen was an exceptionally *lonely* one (“Loneliness, the common ground for terror, [is] the essence of totalitarian government”) that was paralyzed by terror and unable to make moral distinctions, rendering the inability to protest almost an inevitable outcome (Arendt 1968, p. 173). George Orwell’s well known *1984* and Nobel Laureate Czeslaw Milosz’s *The Captive Mind* details “afresh the stages by which the mind gives way to compulsion from without” (Milosz 1981, p. xiv). Freedom of association of any type was a threat and was suppressed (Tismaneanu 1992) by schemes aimed at generating

³⁴ In exchange for absolute vertical loyalty to the Party the individual obtained “liberation from a substantial share of the responsibility for the effectiveness of his work”. Endemic alcoholism is prevalent in many Soviet or former Soviet satellites. “If vodka interferes with your work, give up work” (Heller 1988, p. 134).

³⁵ Hegel: “All this [the dialectic] is the *a priori* structure of history to which empirical reality must correspond” (in Cowen and Shenton 1996, p. 130).

interpersonal mistrust; they “consistently destroyed all manifestations of uncontrolled thought and action, particularly in any organized form” (Schopflin 1990, p. 4).

It bears mentioning again that in 1977 32% of the world’s population lived under classic, “command style” communism. This is why there was serious talk of the “Soviet Achievement” in the West (Nettl 1967) and real fear when Krushchev said in 1961 “We will bury you” (Skidelsky 1995). However, by the spring of 1991, such was the cataclysmic fall of Communism that according to Janos Kornai, only .006% (representing North Korea and Cuba at the time of his writing in 1992) of the world’s population lived under this regime type—a shocking reversal. This global failure inevitably meant that Marxism would be embarrassing as a basis for theologies of liberation. If not completely logically discredited,³⁶ it is largely psychologically discredited (though some critical theorists still take inspiration (Hoy and McCarthy 1994)). Apart from a few academics, “It seems that any regime that calls itself Communist is now discredited” (Craib 1992, p. 149). Significantly, the liberation theologian Leonardo Boff has embraced the Trinity as the framework for liberation—or as he puts it “The Holy Trinity, Our Liberation Program” (Boff 1988; 1988).

Yet if Marxism has lost traction for liberation theologians, it is even more unreliable for EO as an aid to conceptualizing human development. Debates aside about the “real” reasons for its failure, Marxism has left a legacy of moral and environmental corruption and personal unhappiness. One of the most astute commentators on Communism

³⁶ “The wry mood of the Muscovites at the time [of the fall of the Soviet empire, after the fall of regime after regime in Eastern Europe] is nicely caught by a Russian cartoon ... It shows a tattered Marx, Engels, and Lenin seated on a Moscow kerbstone with hats held out for kopecks. Marx is saying to the others, ‘But the theory remains true!’” (Hollis 1994, p. 1).

remarked that “The program for transforming human material [into *homo sovieticus*³⁷] required infantilization of the individual” (Heller 1988). The system engendered a “learned helplessness” (Klicperova, Feierabend et al. 1997) that left its subjects ill-prepared to face the future. The sudden transition from communism to capitalism has not provided solutions, especially in the fight against corruption. And in countries where there were no “lustration laws” preventing the return of Communist leadership, leading politicians have all too often been carry-overs from Communist times (Gallagher 2005). This is sobering in light of the Communist leadership profile described above.

Now the account is in a position to ask the important question: what type of development approach or moral resources can be called upon to help remedy this situation? Marxist inspired Communism was the most aggressive development project in the history of the world. As many as 100,000,000 lives (!) were sacrificed at the altar of its dogmas (Stephane Courtois et al 1999). Minimally, this should signal warnings about “development” that is predominately “for” and not “by” persons. It will be seen in the next chapter that the capabilities approach of Amartya Sen gives pride of place to agency or freedom. Yet importantly, the account above raises questions not only about the role of individual agency, but rebuilding human solidarity, and the role of structures in both humans and the natural world.

Boiling the development challenges down to core principles, it is necessary to deepen the hypothesis presented earlier concerning the presence of these three irreducible dimensions in human development:

³⁷ “Medical students in the Soviet Union begin their Latin course with the sentence, ‘*Homo Sovieticus sum*’ (I am Soviet man). In their first year ... the future doctors learn that there are two types of human being: *Homo sapiens* and *Homo sovieticus*” (Heller 1988).

- *Agency/person*: a sense of and capacity for personal efficacy, freedom; the ability to bring about desirable change; also, the sacredness and irreducibility of the person to communion or nature's processes; each person as a bearer of dignity;
- *Solidarity/communion*:³⁸ a sense of shared communal identity, seen as intrinsically valuable; communion or solidarity requires actual relationships and stability in these; it can aspire beyond these communitarian bonds (i.e. towards concern for humanity as such) but is often limited to them;
- *Structures/shared nature*: the realm of universal laws, dimensions, or functions requiring fulfilment (one of which is communion) for well-being; shared human nature is a basis (strongly so in Orthodoxy) for cosmopolitan ethical obligations.

There may be more principles or factors necessary for conceptualizing human development, but surely not less.³⁹ The next chapter will investigate all three of these in dialogue with Amartya Sen's CA in relation to Communism. However, the third category merits further comment.

Structures should not be abandoned even if the concept was abused by Marxism. The Marxist understanding of "structures" was ideological; it disconnected humans and

³⁸ "Solidarity" is preferable to the social capital language in that solidarity carries stronger moral resonances of actively seeking the good of others. Social capital can sound as if the social dimension is merely a means to the monetary. There is however an important and rich literature on this in relation to post-communist societies, but also international development (Fukuyama 1999; Putnam 2000; Fukuyama 2001; Evers 2003; Badescu, Sum et al. 2004; Hoksbergen 2010). Michael Woolcock has done important work linking social capital with faith (Woolcock 1998; 2002).

³⁹ This Trinitarian conception is synchronic in the sense that it does not obviously imply a movement through time. The Incarnation, the other major dogma, captures this movement, the diachronic developmental aspect. But the Incarnation is a movement from, and back to the Trinity that incorporates the entire human race. This will be dealt with in chapter five and following.

societies from natural and truly empirical processes in a way that destroyed agency and solidarity and ultimately the entire Marxist infrastructure. It viewed human nature as too plastic; it viewed external structures (the dialectic of history) as too determinative; it viewed advancing the species level as ultimate, but in a way that trampled human rights of individual persons. Marx's emphasis on the "species-being" was in view of ushering in the "new man" that uproots the "regular" version of humanity. Orthodoxy's understanding of shared nature serves the exact opposite function and serves as a basis for the moral and spiritual unity of the human race.

Is there a social science theory that conceptualizes human development along all three of these three aspects? As mentioned, all three of these have been theorized in various paired combinations, but it does not seem they are brought together in a conscious and balanced way. Marxism stressed the species level and solidarity, but its vision of humanity encouraged it to transgress the sacredness and freedoms of persons in search of the new humanity. However, each of these three appears to be irreducible and each category must be interpreted in light of the others. Specifically for Marxism, human nature cannot be interpreted without reference to the inherent dignity and agency of the person. Key to the argument here is that Trinitarian theology brings these three inchoate dimensions in the social sciences together in a harmonious vision of the goods of the human person. Revelation "tightens the links of nature", as Basil so well put it.

Even if this approach is promising in terms of a conceptual framework, EO is not being suggested as a simplistic solution. Practice influences values, as values influence practice. EO as both institution and religious culture was deeply affected by Communism. Not only was its leadership imprisoned and abused (Staniloae spent seven years in prison), any type of ecclesial based social work was prohibited (Stan and Turcescu 2000). In variegating levels therefore, Orthodox Churches, if not physically destroyed outright (as in Russia),

were disallowed from engaging in any social *praxis*, including public charity work, which would *de facto* be an insult to the Party's omnicompetence. (Ideologically understood, Communist societies *cannot* have social problems.) Churches left to exist were allowed only to participate in the liturgy; there could be no "liturgy after the liturgy", no service for the world arising from the service within the Church (Bria 1996).

While the argument here is that EO can and should be part of the development solution where the Orthodox religion predominates, this challenging situation left by Communism renders the question of a social scientific dialogue partner all the more pressing. This motivates the subject of the next chapter, which is an examination of Amartya Sen's capability approach which centres itself on the role of agency that was devastated under Communism.

4. THE CAPABILITY APPROACH OF AMARTYA SEN

This chapter will outline the basic contours of Nobel Economist Amartya Sen’s influential capability approach, or CA.¹ The CA is a leading approach to human development and has been fundamental for the United Nations Human Development Reports and has attracted other important thinkers such as Martha Nussbaum to its side. The account will ask whether the CA can helpfully analyze and propose solutions for post-communist development challenges, and thus be an aid for an EO theology of human development. The argument will proceed by first showing the basic concepts of the CA and its analytical strengths. The argument will then interrogate the CA via the previously developed Trinitarian categories—agency (person), solidarity (communion), and structures (shared nature)—in light of the post communist legacy. That each of these dimensions has a role in Sen’s moral ontology will be demonstrated; it is the relative weight of them that will be scrutinized. The argument contends that for Sen’s approach to be truly helpful, it must move beyond development as expanse of individual freedoms and include communion and shared nature as well.

4.1 Equality of What?

The CA is “the most recent paradigm in the evolution of development thought” (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 45), at least of a sort that is receiving widespread acceptance. As Martha Nussbaum notes, prior to the shift with Amartya Sen and the UN Human Development reports beginning in 1990, “the most prevalent approach to measuring

¹ The CA is also called the “Human Development” approach in the UN Development reports, and there is a journal dedicated to the CA that recently combined these two names: the “Journal of Human Development and Capabilities”. This approach is also called “People Centered Development” on the cover of that journal. The account here will stick to CA as a shorthand.

quality of life in a nation used to be simply to ask about GNP [Gross National Product] per capita” (Nussbaum 2002, p. 126), a very crude measure as will be seen.

The CA can perhaps best be thought of as a multifaceted argument for a specific way of conceptualizing development that explicitly includes ethical reasoning. This is to say that the CA has: a) recovered the normative foundations of the social sciences or the “how one should live” question, and b), offered a specific answer to it. The title “human development” (used as a synonym with the CA literature) is a clue that development is to be more centred on actual human lives, while the term capabilities is about how to achieve human development, or that “expansion of capabilities” constitutes what human development is. These “capabilities” are perhaps best understood at this stage as freedoms “to be and do”, some of which are very basic (e.g. food, shelter), some more refined (e.g. political participation). These now famous words from the inaugural “Human Development Report” in 1990 capture the essence of the approach:

People are the real wealth of a nation. The basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to live long, healthy, and creative lives. This may appear to be a simple truth. But it is often forgotten in the immediate concern with the accumulation of commodities and financial wealth (UNDP 1990, p. 9).

This sounds so obvious as to be trivial. But conventional measures of well-being, for example, focusing on GNP, have missed out in nontrivial ways on the real nature of human development. Poverty and well-being are, thus human development is, multidimensional; it cannot be reduced to one variable or dimension.

Important for this overall thesis, the CA is rather faith-friendly, even though the chief architect, Amartya Sen, is sceptical about religion or any strong group identities not rooted in reason or democratic discourse. The CA is faith friendly because “it brings values back to the centre stage”. Religion is a powerful source of values, and “what counts as

development is inevitably based on values” (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 45-6). Other voices, including the number two in the movement, Martha Nussbaum, argue for a more positive, even if critically scrutinized, role for religious identity as a desirable dimension of human development (Nussbaum 2000, pp 167-240; Deneulin forthcoming).² Conceptions of development have moved away from crude utilitarianism and positivism that would uncritically reject religious faith, or even values, making a dialogue more possible. This evolution involves Sen and others’ attacks on positivistic theories that separate fact and value. Development for Sen is the promotion of *valued* beings and doings, and for Nussbaum, “development is itself an evaluative concept” (Nussbaum and Sen 1993, p. 232).

To truly understand the CA is to understand its debates with rival approaches to development. The previous chapter’s discussion about the burdensome structuralism of Communism is part of the widespread resurgence of the concept of agency. And indeed, the CA is strongly oriented to this value and this has determined its choice as a dialogue partner in this study. As Sen writes, “free and sustainable agency emerges as a major engine of development” (Sen 1999, p. 4). This emphasis on agency is critical to understanding Sen’s views on “Development as Freedom”, yet he balances the focus on “self-help” arguing that the substantive freedoms persons enjoy “are extremely contingent on personal, social, and environmental circumstances” (Sen 1999, p. 284). The expanse of substantive freedoms is indeed the goal of development, but it is not its exclusive means; it requires social support: “Individual freedom is a social commitment” (Sen 1990).

² Nussbaum writes: “religion is itself among the important human interests, both in itself and because it represents a central exercise of human choice” (Nussbaum 2000, p. 239). But religion is more than one “interest” alongside others. It functions as a meta-interest that integrates and provides a framework and orientation for other interests and human powers.

The CA is philosophically attractive and has proven a captivating approach, and this has to do with its multidimensionality and extensive range of questions it covers. As Sen asks time and again, what do humans desire commodities *for*? Sen cites Aristotle from the *Nichomachean Ethics*: “wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking; for it is merely useful for the sake of something else” (Sen 1999, p. 14). And as will be developed in the following chapters, there is a formal similarity between CA and Eastern Orthodoxy (of a *potentiality to actuality* developmental structure) which appears to have a common origin in Aristotle.³ Sen’s approach is though highly eclectic; pinning a label on him is very difficult. He is pro-market, but not *laissez-faire*, he promotes agency, but is keenly aware of social preconditions and obstacles (what Sen calls “unfreedoms”); he is liberal in his approach to freedom, but is not against state intervention and redistribution (thus not libertarian⁴); and he combines profound empirical and philosophical analysis in his works.

Development theory is deeply linked with, but not always explicitly, an account of what counts for justice and injustice. Sen’s work *Development as Freedom* opens by highlighting the disparity between the “unprecedented opulence” of the few—hard to imagine even a century or so ago—with a world of still “remarkable deprivation, destitution, and oppression”. He states, citing the *practical* and not merely theoretical nature of this enterprise, “Overcoming these problems is a central part of the exercise of development” (Sen 1999, p. xi). This question of providing considered convictions about the nature of justice and equality, defining, defending and critiquing competing notions, has been at the core of philosophy at least since Socrates. Indeed, one task of Plato’s *Republic* is Socrates’ attack of Polemarchus’ definition of justice as “treating your friends well and your enemies badly” (Plato 2008, p. 10), and why this definition cannot pass the

³ This is the capability-functioning, image-likeness (*theosis*) parallel, both of which take the “potentiality-actuality” structure. Aristotle is a common source in terms of form (Tatakis 2007, p. 94), though of course the content explored within these formal boundaries may be different.

⁴ Sen forcefully critiques Nozick’s libertarian theory presented in (Nozick 1968; Sen 1999, pp 65-67).

test of the examined life—the only one worth living. Sen would agree with this line of enquiry.

In terms of a theory of justice, a good place to start with the capabilities approach is the question Sen raised in his Tanner Lectures (1979): “Equality of What?”. Justice is related in some fashion to the value of equality, injustice to inequality, and the CA offers a distinctive answer to this in terms of the “information space” within which well-being and equality is assessed. As Sen points out, all theories of normative social arrangement offer some answer to this question of what information is to be included, or excluded, precisely in terms of differing understandings of *equality*. Income egalitarians demand income equality, while libertarians demand equality in terms of untrammelled rights to their earnings, free from redistributive constraints. To choose equality in terms of a certain core variable such as income, or resources, or property rights means to allow inequality in peripheral variables (Sen 1992, p. x). Not only what is said, but what is left unsaid is important.

For Sen and capability theorists, the space within which equality is to be evaluated is the “capability space”, or less technically, freedoms “to do and be”. Admittedly this terminology is vague and requires some explanation, especially in light of further technical distinctions such as capability versus functioning. (Functioning is the actual achievement, capability is the freedom to choose and not be coerced into a particular achievement. This will be picked up below.) Most simply, capabilities or functionings—for now they can be viewed as synonymous—are “beings and doings” or more concretely, they answer the question: “What is one actually able to do and to be?” The connection with freedom and agency should be apparent. Capability development is about expanding people’s substantive freedoms and enabling them to live long, healthy, and creative lives. The goal is human freedom or more precisely, capability expansion. The CA asks how people

are faring, not just how production is doing. It is about living with dignity, viewed as inseparable from freedom, freedom to do and be what one has “reason to value”.⁵ Critically, Sen and the CA emphasize that cultural values can also enhance or impede these freedoms to pursue one’s own lifestyle, guided by reason. The UN Development Program (UNDP) launched the first human development report under Mahbub ul Haq in 1990 with guidance from Amartya Sen, with the single goal of putting people back in the centre of the development process, and not mere incomes.

More profoundly, this notion of “capability” is informed by an Aristotelian notion of human functioning or flourishing, developed especially by Nussbaum (Nussbaum 1992; 2000), but also informing Sen’s approach though less vigorously so (Nussbaum and Sen 1993, p. 46-7). These human functionings are seen as *constitutive* of human well being. Such functions include, *inter alia*, “being adequately nourished, being in good health, avoiding escapable morbidity and premature mortality ... [and] more complex achievements such as being happy, taking part in the life of the community, and so on” (Sen 1992, p. 39). Martha Nussbaum, the other highly distinguished advocate of the Capability Approach, writes, “The basic intuition from which the capability approach begins ... is that human abilities exert a moral claim that they should be developed” (Nussbaum 2002, p. 124). She differentiates the CA from preference based (utilitarianism) or resource based approaches (basic needs), and insists that the central question of the CA is not “How satisfied” is this woman, or “How many resources” she is able to command, but what she is actually able to “do and be” (Nussbaum 2002, p. 129). Even if a definition of complete human functioning cannot be agreed upon in a comprehensive fashion, agreement is not hard to obtain when major dimensions are unfulfilled. “The greatest

⁵ This “reason to value” phrase is employed often by Sen as a signal, as it were, for the demands of rationality, versus a willy-nilly version of freedom.

relevance of ideas of justice lies in the identification of *patent injustice*” (Sen 1999, p. 289).

While freedom and valuable beings and doings are potentially infinitely rich and immeasurable, there are some proxy measures that can operationalize it. As the most famous example, the Human Development Index (HDI) takes three variables, namely 1) longevity or life expectancy, which will indirectly reflect infant and child mortality 2) a weighted average of education (enrolment rates-1/3, and adult literacy-2/3's) and 3) the level of adjusted income per capita (the effect of income on improvements in well-being is considered increasingly marginal at approximately \$5000-\$6000 per capita). These three combined in a weighted manner, while admittedly omitting much, are a much better measure than crude GNP. There are two distinct reasons for this. The first reason is the presence of what are called “conversion factors”. One's ability to put income (or a uniform set of basic commodities) to good use for human flourishing is variable. For example, to achieve a certain level of functioning to keep warm requires significantly more calories both in terms of food, and combustible materials (heat) in Siberia, than in the tropics. In many situations, this variability in conversion factors can mean the difference between life and death. Furthermore, a person with disabilities will require even more resources to approximate an “adequate” level of human functioning (Nussbaum 2006). Development analysis and informed public policy should, under the light of the CA, take account of these divergences, these conversion factors, and not orient itself to an invariable set of basic needs or a fixed income function.

The second reason is that GNP tends to look at income at the household level which can hide serious injustices under this umbrella such as males commanding the lion's share of food. For instance, Sen and many others have pointed out how intrafamilial injustices (sex biases in poverty) can be undetected if income is measured in terms of the family unit. Per

capita income measured at the household level can “hide” important, even life threatening information in terms of individuals, usually females, living under the same roof (Sen 1997). While aggregate GNP at the household level will not capture this dimension of injustice, education and longevity, the other two dimensions of the HDI, *measured at the level of the individual*, will. And these two latter variables correlate strongly with (if are not direct causal factors of) many other well-being concerns, such as the ability to find work outside the home, which in turn reflects how persons are treated in the family and whether or not they might receive fair income or commodity shares. It is important to mention though that the CA does not omit the importance of income for achieving well-being outcomes. It is rather that this income variable alone does not provide an adequate indication of human well-being—and this is one of the foundational points of development studies. There indeed have been dramatic and widespread increases in, for example, health outcomes worldwide. Studies show that some countries such as Costa Rica and Sri Lanka have made strides in life expectancy and literacy significantly greater than other countries with similar per capita incomes (Sen 1992, p. 126). This means that well-being cannot be fully correlated with income, which stands in tension with the overly simple “wealthier is healthier” relationship (Kenney 2009, p. 34).

While per capita income is important for well-being, it must be put in its proper perspective. A staple contention of development studies is that countries with relatively low incomes can, in fact, achieve dramatic increases in basic well-being. Kerala is perhaps the most storied example, which features prominently in Amartya Sen’s writings.

The very first Human Development reports that:

Fairly respectable levels of human development are possible even at fairly modest levels of income. Life does not begin at \$11,000, the average per capita income in the industrialized world. Sri Lanka [another example] managed a life expectancy of 71 years and an adult literacy rate of 87% with a per capita income of \$400 (UNDP 1990, p. 2).

The inverse also holds true, that the rankings of HDI can illustrate how a relatively high-income country can fare very poorly in other development goals such as literacy and longevity (Ray 1998).

If human development can be regarded as a theological concern, and the argument here is that under certain theological paradigms it very well can be,⁶ development analyses can have potential dividends in the promotion of social justice and broad-based well being. Another important example is the debate over the trade-offs between economic growth and meeting basic needs, or put in other terms, free market vs. state intervention in development. Amartya Sen has shown in the case of Sri Lanka that it would take between 58 and 152 years for Sri Lanka to achieve the same level of basic needs (supports for human functioning) through a “trickle-down” strategy of economic growth rather than through direct public/state provision of basic needs (Sen 1981). Further, it is highly doubtful that real tensions exist between economic growth and public investment in basic needs, and the latter promotes the former (Hicks 1979). These are the type of analyses theologians can hardly be expected to provide, and yet, inasmuch as Christians should be interested in human well-being, familiarity with these concepts becomes important as a basis for informed advocacy.

Here, the CA can be further clarified by comparing it with competing notions of human rights, including those informed by Marxism.⁷ Rights schemes or debates have traditionally been cast in terms of *negative* vs. *positive* liberties, a distinction made famous in Isaiah Berlin’s 1948 essay, “Two Concepts of Liberty” (Berlin 1969). Freedom in the “negative” sense is often what “Moderns” mean by it, freedom from coercion, freedom to

⁶ This connection should not be assumed. Colin Gunton from a Protestant perspective writes, “salvation and flourishing of human people is, and should remain, at the heart of Christian teaching”, but his entire work is to demonstrate why this has not been the case and how it can be rectified (Gunton 1998, p. 166).

⁷ Of course Marxism rejected Western individual rights as bourgeois luxuries, but the types of socio-economic rights enjoined by Marxism will be discussed below.

be and do what one wants, even freedom from any type of political participation.⁸ Freedom in the “positive” sense, on the other hand, is “freedom for”: virtues or powers to be and do certain things. Classically, this positive freedom demands political participation. As Aristotle inimitably put it, to not be involved in the life of the *polis* is to be either a “beast or a god” (Aristotle 1999, p. 14).⁹ The distinction between these two types of freedom is important to the liberal-communitarian debate in political philosophy (discussed in chapter two), but recapitulated in development studies. According to Berlin, these two visions of rights, the negative and the positive, need not be incompatible, though they imply different values. Amartya Sen agrees with Berlin that both of these types of freedoms are among the types of things worth doing or being.¹⁰ Sen repeatedly emphasizes the importance of public participation and views this as key to the formation of values.

Though not mirroring this distinction exactly, another major controversy over how to characterize rights occurred primarily in the 20th century, and is associated with Marxist-inspired Communism. “Western” style rights, in opposition to the economic rights argued for in Communism, focused largely on political entitlements, the rights of free speech, and less on rights that might be understood to more *directly* enable human flourishing—such as shelter and work. The rift between these rights regimes is so deep that there are two

⁸ This restricted understanding of rights is why some Orthodox have “opposed” Western human rights (Pollis 1993; Guroian 1998; Yannaras 2002). For a more balanced perspective, see (Harakas 1982). It is important to note that EO questions the adequacy of the human rights framework for many similar reasons as the CA, as well as some of the “communitarian” reasons that questions “rights talk” and the impoverishment of political discourse by focusing on autonomy (Glendon 1991).

⁹ Socrates would appear to be an exception here; he refused to participate in many aspects of the political life of Athens and was accused of “living in the clouds” by the comic poet Aristophanes, of being above the moral claims of local politics. This is evident in the “Apology” (Grube 1981). Aristotle talks about the differences between the virtues of the man *qua* man, and man as citizen of a particular *polis* (Aristotle 1999). Aristotle sided “mostly” with the latter. The liberal-communitarian debate is foreshadowed in the debate between Socrates/Plato and Aristotle, and even between Aristotle and himself.

¹⁰ Sen references Isaiah Berlin’s classic distinction as referring to “whether a person’s lack of ability to achieve something is caused by an external restraint or hindrance [negative freedom], or by a limitation internal to the person [positive freedom]” (Sen 2002, p. 11-12).

separate UN Covenants, one on Civil and Political Rights, and one on Economic, Social and Cultural rights.¹¹ A major distinguishing factor and the hallmark of Marxist thought is the “right to work” (Uvin 2004, p. 11), along with other items not found in the Covenant of Civil and Political rights, such as adequate shelter.

The CA is concerned with providing the framework for *both* of these types of rights—economic and political—as both of these are enabling conditions for adequate human functioning. Thus the CA provides the rationale for the provision of basic needs such as food, shelter (taking into account conversion factors), but also for the provision of adequate space for the effective exercise of one’s agency, the freedom aspect of development.¹² Nussbaum’s “list”—delineated in the next chapter—aspires to provide an overlapping “political” consensus (i.e. not a controversial metaphysical account) of the ten core human functionings that all societies should support regardless of what else they may believe or hold dear. For Nussbaum, these are the core elements of any flourishing human life—and her list includes *both* types of rights. Sen, however, is reluctant to specify any such universal list, keeping his approach more general in a principled stance of “assertive incompleteness”. He does include however five distinct types of freedoms that are viewed as “instrumental” for the exercise of individual freedoms. These include: 1) political freedoms 2) economic facilities 3) social opportunities 4) guarantees of transparency and 5) protective facilities (Sen 1999, p. 10).¹³

¹¹ These deep differences over rights are the reason that rights language did not enter development discourse until the 1990’s.

¹² Obvious here is a paradox, or an *aporia* (Greek for impasse or puzzlement): what comes first, the social conditions (structures) that enable the effective exercise of agency, or the agency required to create the conditions (structures)? This is a paradox at the heart not just of Sen’s CA, but any theory will face this challenge.

¹³ Sen’s genius lies in exploring the surprising empirical connections between these diverse freedoms. Already mentioned was the connection between freedom from famine (i.e. freedom to experience life itself) and the freedoms associated with democracy.

A central idea of the CA is thus that poverty is *multidimensional*, going beyond any single dimension such as income or health; or stated positively: “Freedom is an irreducibly plural concept” (Sen 2002, p. 585). It was mentioned above that the HDI (Human Development Index) has received criticism such that a “full assessment of human development requires a much broader set of indicators than HDI alone” (Ranis, Stewart et al. 2006). It is important to note that Human Development (the CA) goes far beyond the HDI, with which it is often mistakenly equated. Recent work to detail this fuller understanding of the dimensions of human development, and a corresponding aspiration to operationalize a better set of indicators, is the Multi-Poverty index which helps reveal “missing dimensions”. Like Nussbaum’s list, this Multi-Poverty Index (MPI) moves even more clearly beyond mere political entitlements to the provision of basic needs, but with a few further refinements.

The new MPI was included in the 2010 UN Human Development report (UNDP 2010) and is utilized by the Mexican, Colombian and Bhutanese governments. Unlike other indicators, the MPI can measure the intensity of multi-dimensional poverty, but is also sensitive to regional differences. For instance, one report notes “the highest incidence of multidimensional poverty in 2008 was Chiapas, with 76.7 percent of its population in this situation (CONEVAL 2009, p. 3)). This reflects interregional variations of poverty that an overall indicator such as GNP or even HDI cannot easily capture. However, the MPI is not without its problems such as data collection: all the data must come from the same house-hold survey and better sources of data are often unusable. Also, some of the poverty weightings imply value judgements that are questionable. That the death of a child (in the health category) can even be compared with and placed side by side with not having a television, or having a dirt floor (both of these are in the standard of living category) can

be offensive.¹⁴ However imperfect, the MPI is but one of many attempts to better measure and operationalize the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and well-being.

Social analyses provided by the CA can provide needed focus for Christian's "neighbourly" obligations. In a globalized world where there is a sense of responsibility now for distant neighbours, infinite obligation can overwhelm and numb. The types of analyses development studies provides can offer focused insights into where help is most needed, often the type of help needed as well, and unearth surprising causal connections that can provide entry points for efficient intervention. And the CA's focus is on extreme poverty, though it is not limited to this. Amartya Sen wrote in the introduction to the 2010 Human Development Report:

the human development approach is motivationally committed to concentrating on what remains undone—what demands most attention in the contemporary world—from poverty and deprivation to inequality and insecurity (UNDP 2010, p. vi).

But much is still to be learned in this evolving field, and more interaction with religion is necessary to properly conceptualize valuable beings and doings in non-Western contexts but also and especially to motivate human development. The account now turns to analyzing why GDP¹⁵ (or more simply, development understand in purely economic terms) was completely inadequate as an indicator of well-being under Communism, a fact which can further illuminate the post-communist legacy and also demonstrate the relevance of the CA.

¹⁴ The MPI has ten indicators in three dimensions: health, education, and standard of living. Each of these domains receives equal overall weight, with sub-domains in each.

¹⁵ Previously GNP, Gross National Product was used. This includes incomes earned internationally by citizens of a country. This applies less to Communism so GDP, Gross Domestic Product, is employed. This expresses what is earned within the geographical boundaries of a country.

4.2 Communism and the relevance of the CA

If GDP is an imperfect indicator under most political regimes, under Communism it is a perfectly irrelevant and even deceitful indicator. This is important because sometimes it is argued that life was “better” under Communism, or that productivity under capitalist regimes is negative compared to that under communist regimes. The following account will put these claims in perspective and demonstrate the relevance of the CA to make nuanced judgements.

It is a serious mistake to compare pre-revolution GDP figures to post revolution figures and take this comparison at face value. First of all, regimes regularly doctored statistics so that GDP was almost meaningless in a communist economy. Not only was this due to inaccuracies and mistakes in the accounting system, but there was also a tendency to present a more favourable picture than was really true (Kornai 1992, p. 51). Communism developed its own unique accounting system whereby digging a hole one day and filling it in the next can both be counted as productive activities in terms of overall GDP. As Hayek points out, the nature of a totalitarian state is characterized by a wartime mentality; anything, including unfavourable comparisons with other countries, which can cast doubt on the government and its plans, can be viewed as treason (Hayek 1974, p. 160). Socialist governments also experienced very high corruption as mentioned, but this also distorted reliable information (Svensson 2005, p. 24). These distortions are results of the ‘command’ type economy and the type of character and value formation that took place in a continuous wartime mentality. This will be examined more extensively shortly.

Second, GDP and economic productivity are misguided indicators because Communism was a type of *forced* growth; great quantity was achieved at the expense of quality. Despite occasional high industrial output, often the goods were not what “customers” (the

entire population) wanted or even needed. There was no pricing system to signal customers' needs or desires—almost everything was bureaucratically decided. So while productivity may have been high, it was not always aimed at the needs and desires of the populations of these regime types, and the quality of goods was so shoddy that there was little chance for export on the world market. Nowhere is this more graphically illustrated than the fact that East Germany was “among the world’s most highly developed countries in per capita production and consumption terms, yet it was still a shortage economy. East German citizens could not get the things they wanted to buy with their money” (Kornai 1992, p. 289).¹⁶ This coordination/allocation problem applies *a fortiori* to most other Communist countries.

Besides these reasons for the inappropriateness of GDP comparisons, a leading scholar on the political economy of Communism, Janos Kornai (whom this section has relied heavily upon), points out “system specific” reasons why shortages were so common, even universal, under Communism. There are two types of shortages; one is due to a low level of economic development, and the other is due to “the failure to satisfy buyers”. Kornai argues that beside specific instances of incompetence, faulty economic policy (e.g. mistakes in the production plan), economic backwardness and the like, there are *system specific features* such that it can be scientifically understood why certain “failures” will occur more within one system type than another—even despite good intentions. While it is not important to enter into the complexities of his argument, Kornai asserts that the shortage syndrome is linked to the “basic traits of the system: the structure of power, official ideology, bureaucratic public ownership, and dominance of bureaucratic coordination over other coordination forms [e.g. price mechanism]” (Kornai 1992, p. 291).

¹⁶ For example, the celebrated coal miners, the working class *par excellence*, would often receive very high salaries, but without connections to other markets (informal or underground), the money meant very little in terms of purchasing power as there was little worth buying.

The lack of a signalling system between buyers and sellers meant that even with the best of intentions, massive failures would occur. The shortage syndrome was thus endemic to the Communist regime type.¹⁷

But even beyond this question of whether GDP is a reliable indicator for well-being, Sen would argue that even if adequate provision is made in terms of commodities, serious losses in well-being would be entailed if freedom is seriously curtailed. As Sen points out, to deny persons the right to interact with each other in markets entails social losses (Sen 1999, p. 26)—to put it mildly. Human freedom thus has its own value and its value is independent of its instrumental contribution to the free-market system. This can be illustrated by analyzing some genuine achievements of Communism.

It is well known that many communist countries have fared comparatively well in health and education such as Vietnam and Cuba. Are these achievements simply to be dismissed? Is the failure of Communist economies due to their heavy investment in social services? Capital-*ism* has its own ideology which can cause it to mistake the reason for the failure of socialist economies. It was not because they supported social services. Rather it was the aforementioned intrusive, military nature of the command-economy such that there could be no signal between buyer and seller—all was coordinated in a top-down fashion. This absolute concentration of power entailed the systemic failure of Communism, not its provision of social services. In line with this, a point that merits continued emphasis is that the correlation between income and overall well-being operates through the provision of basic social services. Sen has empirically shown that the positive correlation of GDP to life expectancy operates only *through* the medium of higher public spending (Drèze and

¹⁷ These massive shortages meant many hours standing in line and conversing. This eventuated in jokes such as the following: “What happened when the desert became communist? Well, nothing for a while, then there was a sand shortage”. This type of humour was ubiquitous under Communism, and illegal. Sociologist Peter Berger called humour in the face of difficult situations a “signal of Transcendence” (Berger 1970).

Sen 2002). Similarly, markets can be highly defective as a signalling system at critical times for the basic needs for the poor. In Sen's work on famines he has shown that "the needs and wants of the poor register faintly in markets" (Sen 1981; Anderson 2005, p. 249) and these "market failures" can mean widespread starvation even in the midst of adequate foodstuffs. Thus, there are times when the "free" market simply cannot be relied upon as an indicator of, engine for, or guarantee of human well-being. Direct state intervention is required. If markets are to be judged superior as an overall economic system (and Sen believes they are, with various qualifications), it is because they have a superior ability to provide basic social supports for human functioning—and a principal mechanism for this is increased public spending.

It might be argued at this juncture that the Communist economic system could be legitimated less in terms of economic output but more on the achievements of equality under Communism. There was indeed a radical redistribution of wealth in the early "revolutionary transitional" phase such that the Communist system came closest to applying truly egalitarian principles and made real achievements (more on these below). Yet as Communism became consolidated, as the initial revolutionary fervour subsided, these achievements receded. Along with the abovementioned distortion in the statistical reporting, exaggerating the equality achievements was rampant as this also served ideological ends. The "Gini Coefficient" comparisons (a measurement of inequality within a country) of income distribution are only marginally helpful as the nonmonetary income of the elite is not registered. Still, with distortions taken into consideration, the cross country Gini comparisons themselves do not reveal any decisive achievements in equality under Communist regimes that would justify the suffering inflicted. Better achievements towards the ideal of equality were made by Scandinavian welfare economies (Kornai 1992, p. 318). Western literati who travelled to Communist countries, looking for a beacon of

hope in terms of human equality, returned disillusioned at the profligacy of the bureaucratic elite (Crossman 2001).

This brief section has tried to show the relevance of the CA by focusing on capabilities as the basis of development, and the irrelevance of GDP under communism. An important feature of the CA is that it can help cut through sterile debates such as “States or Markets?” (Colclough 1993). It can recognize and combine the real strengths of each system—Communism’s investment in public services and the market’s economic efficiency. “Without ignoring the importance of economic growth, we must look well beyond it” (Sen 1999, p. 14) for the real nature of human development.

The question however is where beyond economic growth “we must look”? It was suggested earlier that development requires minimally three dimensions—agency, solidarity, and a focus on structures—and that Communism damaged all three of these dimensions. The account will now query Sen’s CA on each of these. This will illustrate characteristic strengths and perhaps weaknesses but it will also serve to clarify the valuational priorities of the CA in relation to EO.

4.3 Beyond Individual Freedoms: a Trinitarian imaging of human development

Development has been interpreted as various combinations of agency, solidarity, and structures. But for Sen, the focus is almost exclusively on agency: development *as* freedom. The argument here, inspired by an EO conception of the person, but emerging through reflective interaction with DS, is that freedom is extremely important, but it is not enough. The anthropological formula “persons in communion within the medium of a shared nature” can help clarify development challenges precisely because it is a more

adequate view of the multidimensional character of human development. To transpose Sen's language: "without ignoring the importance of freedom, we must look well beyond it". Furthermore, the same applies *ceteris paribus* for the other values, communion/solidarity and structures/nature. In other words, focusing on only one or two of these dimensions may mean misdescribing human development.

Human development is not just a theoretical exercise, but what David Crocker called (somewhat inelegantly) "development theory-practice" (Crocker 1992, p. 585). Development as was seen in the CA calls for actually "overcoming these problems" (Sen 1999, p. xi) of global injustice, stunted lives and removing various forms of unfreedom. Sen's version of the CA, profound and elaborate as it is in many regards, may prove flaccid because it undervalues important sources of solidarity (such as shared nature or communitarian values) in favour of agency or freedom. Moderns fancy that moral obligations only arise from within situations in which persons have freely given their consent (Gillespie 2008, p. 246). The argument here seeks to broaden the moral bases for human development beyond, but including, individual freedoms.

4.3.1 Agency (Person)

There is little doubt that Sen's version of the CA privileges agency or freedom (the two terms are not clearly differentiated by Sen). Other values can come into play, but they appear to be instrumental to this end. Occasionally, there are exceptions (see below), but the overall thrust is that the means of development, but more importantly, its ultimate end, is the exercise of individual agency. From the very first Human Development report came the famous line: "Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices" (UNDP 1990, p.1).

For Sen, development is clearly about one goal and that is the increase in the range and quality of *individual* choices, or freedoms. There may be many means, some necessary, to this end, but the end is the expansion of choice. For Sen, individual agency is ultimately central to questions of poverty reduction, but clearly not only that. Sen conceives of these freedoms as the greater “part of the content of, rather than the conditions for or means to, a full life” (Crocker 1992, p. 604). Freedom is *constitutive* of human development. Martha Nussbaum reiterates this point: “The core idea seems to be that of the human being as a dignified free being who shapes his or her own life, rather than being passively shaped or pushed around by the world in the manner of a flock or herd animal” (Nussbaum 2002). Agency is about conceiving the person as a “doer”, an agent, and not merely a patient (Sen 1987, p. 59). There are profound truths here, but one can note that development as *expanse of freedoms* appears incompatible with the idea that development might also be a process of narrowing and structuring one’s choices in the light of the sacrifices involved in helping or giving space for others to achieve their freedoms. The “information space” of Sen’s CA may not be constructed in a way that the conflicting or complementary nature of freedoms is well registered. It may miss many of the “social facts” and that well-being may not best be understood primarily in terms of expansion of individual choice (Gasper 2002; Gasper and Stavern 2005). These themes will be returned to under solidarity below.

An important distinction between “capability” and “functioning” was mentioned earlier. The purpose of this fundamental distinction is to highlight the role of free agency and its genuine importance can be illustrated from the experience of Communism. In the CA, *functioning* is the actual achievements or outcomes, while *capability* is the freedom to choose a particular achievement or set of achievements. Communism provided a fairly adequate set of human functionings, such as work and shelter (and these were real

achievements), yet this was done without sufficient regard for agency. The considerable human *functionings* that the State was to provide for its subjects under Communism were:

- 1) Full employment and freedom from the oppressive threat of unemployment;
- 2) Free Public Education;
- 3) Comprehensive public pension system, covering the entire population;
- 4) Housing (provided one works);
- 5) A welfare net provided by the State if one's own family cannot provide; and
- 6) Public Security, of a very strict sort (Kornai 1992, p. 312-313).

To use Sen's terminology, Communism aimed at the expansion of human *functionings*, but not (enough) at the exercise of *capabilities*, or freedoms to achieve various combinations of functionings. Communism sought to *install* a set of human functionings based on the above list, and moved persons around like chess-pieces on a board. The disregard for basic freedoms (or capabilities) was so severe that Marxism is incompatible with many basic human rights (Hook 1968; Lukes 1982; Kolakowski 1990; Lukes 1993). Marxism viewed individual rights as bourgeois ideology and as an impediment to social reconstruction.¹⁸ It was thought, perhaps understandably at the time, that development could be largely *for* persons, and not *by* persons. This element of *by* persons however is the element of agency and is the fundamental element of Sen's articulation of the CA. The 1991 HDR writes: "It has to be development of the people, by the people, for the people" (UNDP 1991, p. 14).

¹⁸ In this vein, Marx opposed what were called the "True Socialists" who opposed the doctrine of open class warfare on the grounds that that this would violate the rights and ideals of equality for which they laboured. Marx believed this approach was utterly naïve and that those in power would never respond to mere moral argumentation (Berlin 1965, p. 146-147).

This is why Sen is so adamant about not specifying a “natural” set or list of human functionings as this would “restrict the room for democratic decision making” about valuable beings and doings (Sen 1999, p. 286). Broad guidance however is provided by Sen’s CA in terms of the removal of unfreedoms, but his silence on a normative set of human functionings (unlike Nussbaum) signals Sen’s esteem for individual agency as *the* goal for development. Both Nussbaum and Sen however differentiate clearly between a) functioning and b) the freedom to pursue various functions, or in other words, capabilities.¹⁹ Capabilities are a set of “vectors” of functioning, possible sets of outcomes that are *freely chosen* (Sen 1992, p. 39; Nussbaum and Sen 1993). Communism shows in a decisive way the necessity of freedom as a fundamental human development value. The question now is whether there are reasons to move beyond this singular focus. And indeed, Amartya Sen does so, but in a very tentative fashion.

4.3.2 Solidarity (Communion)

In following chapters the question will be raised whether Sen’s notion of agency should be enriched through the virtue tradition, critically appropriated in the light of development needs, but precisely in order to tie agency more closely to solidarity. This at least is what a theology of development along EO lines (and Adam Smith²⁰) might advocate. But here the role of solidarity in the CA must be examined on its own terms. On the one hand, solidarity is clearly a strong *background* value; even though infrequently mentioned it is everywhere assumed. That capability development is to be universal is everywhere

¹⁹ Nussbaum argues similarly that “capability, not functioning, is the appropriate political goal” both because her list of central human capabilities attaches great importance to practical reason (i.e. agency), and also to avoid paternalism (Nussbaum 2000, p. 87). Whether this aim for capability and not functioning is a feasible, operationalizable goal is one that cannot be addressed here but the CA is subject to this criticism—and is perhaps why the Millennium Development Goals gathered such momentum so quickly.

²⁰ Chapter six will show that Sen “cherry-picked” important ideas of Smith’s such as the Impartial Spectator that rely on his virtue theory.

implied, meaning a cosmopolitan (global) reach of the value of solidarity, not merely local or nationalistic understandings. Sen does attempt to justify solidarity by appealing to reason (Sen 1999; Sen 2000; Sen 2002) and notions such as “open impartiality”, a retrieval of Adam Smith’s “impartial spectator” device which tends toward a cosmopolitan type of ethic (Sen 2002). Sen’s solidarity is decidedly not communitarian (Sen 1999; Sen 2006). This type of liberal cosmopolitanism is abstracted from concrete relationships and is rooted in nothing besides personal freedom guided by reason exercised within idealistically conceived democratic processes. Despite the Aristotelian resonances of the CA, Sen (more so than Nussbaum) is quite weak on the intrinsically relational nature of humans, the “Aristotelian” point that humans are “by nature” social and political animals.²¹ According to this Aristotelian perspective on human functioning, human well-being has relational and not just freedom bearing properties. Later, an attempt will be made to reconcile communitarian expressions of solidarity with the cosmopolitanism implied in human development and show that the very heart of Christianity is a position best described (in social science language) as “communitarian cosmopolitanism”.

For Sen, solidarity is “occasionally” a strong value in an explicit sense. In his work co-authored with Jean Drèze on India, Sen argues that democratic processes are often defective due to the lack of “voice” of the poor because socio-economic inequalities limit their effectiveness in public participation. The voices of the disadvantaged, even though they are many, are crowded out by the rich who receive disproportionate attention due to superior education, communication skills, and wealth. The remedies for this “voicelessness” are two: one is “assertion”, which is the self-assertion of the underprivileged through political organization. This idea of “assertion” corresponds

²¹ Sen does make frequent reference to democracy (Sen 1999, p. 148) and this comes very close to Aristotle’s notion of man as a political animal. But Sen seems to ignore or treat adversely other forms of sociability, the family, religion and other communal identities (Sen 2006).

almost exactly with agency and this characterization can help clarify what forms agency might take in terms of public action. The other remedy for “voicelessness” is solidarity *on behalf of* the disadvantaged by those who are better placed due to the advantages of “formal education, media contacts, economic resources and political connections” (Drèze and Sen 2002, p. 29). And on the same page they write that “Both self-assertion and solidarity may be regarded as important parts of the creation of social opportunities, with intrinsic as well as instrumental value”. Later in the book, they write, “The real answer to global inequality lies in the growing possibilities of solidarity across the world, which are part of “globalization” in the broad sense” (Drèze and Sen 2002, p. 345). Solidarity needs to be exercised *on behalf of* the victims of deprivation and inequality. This is an important point harmonious with Biblical concerns for justice: to care for the orphan, the widow, the dispossessed.

There are however dangers for an overreliance on solidarity—which Sen and Drèze point out in their work on India. Those acting on behalf of and in solidarity with others may not properly understand or represent their interests. This was the case *par excellence* with the Communist bureaucracy acting on behalf of the *hoi polloi*, the “proletariat” (the passive masses). Solidarity, even well-intentioned, can violate the principle of subsidiarity, which is intended to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and where possible, by the citizen.²² Still, there are many cases where solidarity (aid for the disadvantaged by those who are privileged) is the only option, especially in contexts where citizenship is denied and “assertion” is impossible. In the Indian context, Sen and Drèze write: “Ultimately, both assertion and solidarity are needed for effective political action” (Drèze and Sen 2002, p. 30).

²² Subsidiarity is now EU policy but had its origins in Catholic Social Teaching.

But does this balanced approach between agency and solidarity, which can provide some minimal moral guidance for freedom, receive sustained attention in Sen's other works? This does not seem to be the case. Other values, including and especially rationality for Sen, may come in to inform freedom, but freedom is the supreme value.²³ Sen cleverly notes that "Individual Freedom is a Social commitment", which is the last chapter in his *Development as Freedom*. Social commitments may be important, as are various structures that qualify freedom: "the freedom and agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified by the social, political, and economic opportunities that are available to us" (Sen 1999, p. xi-xii). However, these social commitments and structural features are clearly instrumental, and not intrinsic, goods.

To further this point, Sen often writes as if, by means of freedom and rationality, deeply embedded identities (which are themselves powerful sources of solidarity) can be exchanged rather casually. For instance, in his work *Identity and Violence*, he sounds many notes in the following key: "The reasoning in the choice of relevant identities ... may have to take note of the social context...", or, "In each social context, there would be a number of potentially viable and relevant identities which one could assess in terms of their acceptability and their relative importance" (Sen 2006, p. 27-29). At this point, one must question Sen's social psychology. His account makes it too easy to stand outside of, and exercise reasoned choice over, one's identity (or identities), as if a person's identity is entirely separable and not derived (at least in part) from their communal context. Without being reductionist, it is important to mention (contrary to Sen's emphasis) that identities

²³ Sen apparently believes reason alone can give adequate guidance to freedom to bring about sufficient solidarity to move persons and societies closer to human development. However, these chains of reasoning are complex and they are heavy: Sen's one book dedicated specifically to the linkages between freedom and rationality runs over 700 pages. While this is no argument against the approach *per se*, it is perhaps an argument against its utility (Sen 2002).

are more like lenses *through* which persons look and perceive what is rational and acceptable and even what features of the context are relevant.²⁴

Still, Sen rightly focuses on agency. The Communist disaster was largely due to the exclusion of freedom or what Sen calls the capability (vs. functioning) aspect in development. But while Sen does not exclude the possibility of other values coming into play, it seems that he does not allow them to have a binding, or *intrinsic* status—they are *instrumental* to the *summum bonum* of expanding individual freedoms. Many others have lodged similar criticisms of the CA including: the need for a greater focus on responsibility (Giri 2000) and a more normative or “perfectionist” approach (Deneulin 2002); the dangers of an instrumentalized view of community (Gasper 2002); lack of structures of living together (Deneulin 2008); a lack of a critique of opulence (Cameron 2000); a stronger role for groups and group agency (Stewart 2005); ignoring the existence of “irreducibly social goods” (Taylor 1985; 1995; Gore 1997), and, perhaps most plainly, insufficient attention to “responsibility for each other’s freedom” (Ballet, Dubois et al. 2007).²⁵ These critiques of Sen’s version of the CA from the social scientific literature are in line with what this dissertation argues: for development to achieve its worthwhile aims, agency as a fundamental value of development must not only be balanced with, but empowered by a specific *vision* of social solidarity; otherwise, agency risks being aimless, irrelevant and powerless for achieving the moral aim(s) implicit in development theory-practice. Thus solidarity (or some moral equivalent) must be given a non-instrumental, and thus “ultimate”, status in the ontology of the CA. Appealing to the “dictates of rationality” (Sen 2002, p. 29) as the singular guiding feature of freedom is insufficient and

²⁴ However, this point should not be overstated. Contrary to the “narrative identity” (communitarian) approach, and to Sen’s, the argument here is that no one dimension is exercised without being mutually implicated in the others. Identity formation could be conceptualized as an ongoing dialogue between reasoned agency, communal tradition(s), and shared human nature. This point will be further developed.

²⁵ Adding to these lines of criticism, it should be noted that Sen misreads the social capital literature and does not note the most basic “bonding versus bridging” distinction and treats it all as “bonding” or “in-group” orientated (Sen 2004).

could result in an infinite regression.²⁶ Marxism also claimed to be guided solely by reason.

Agency is nourished and guided towards various ends by various moral sources, including communitarian or traditional conceptions of what it means to be a human. These include religious faith that informs one's very notions of personhood (Smith 2010), and also as a powerful source of activism (Smith 1996). But neither should Sen's emphasis on reasoned scrutiny be dismissed as communitarian norms can indeed be defective.

In terms of concepts of personhood that can provide values for human development, which is to say linking agency more closely with human solidarity, this can be nourished by stronger notions of a) humans having a social/relational nature and thus a basic need being communion, and b) shared nature as a moral basis for *extending* this communion outward. Sen's "liberal" version of the CA, focusing as it does on individual freedoms as the means and ends of development, risks *ignoring* at best, or *undermining* at worst, important sources of well-being and social solidarity that have both intrinsic worth in themselves, and instrumental significance for other development objectives. The next section enriches this discussion by a careful appeal to the notion of nature that can balance both the focus on freedom and communitarian forms of solidarity.

4.3.3 Structures (Nature)

Human development such as that envisioned in the capabilities approach presupposes an extremely robust sense of solidarity among humans. Justifying and making sense of this value should be one of the principal aims of development studies. Sen leans heavily, if

²⁶ Sen writes: "There could be, I hope, reasoned scrutiny of the role assigned to reasoned scrutiny in this approach to rationality" (Sen 2002, p. 48). This is admitting that reason alone may not be enough. Not surprisingly, Sen does not follow up on the implications of this.

not entirely, on autonomy and rationality, understood broadly as “the discipline of subjecting one’s choices—of actions as well as objectives, values and priorities—to reasoned scrutiny” (Sen 2002, p. 4). Solidarity appears to be guided somehow by rationality, but it seems always to return back to an appeal to the core value of individual freedom. “The use of socially responsible reasoning and of ideas of justice relates closely to the centrality of individual freedom” (Sen 1999, p. 261).

Interestingly, Sen rarely addresses the “why” question of human development. Sen argues tepidly that “we have the ability to contemplate the lives of others” (Sen 1999, p. 183), but having the ability to do so does not explain why one *should*, that is, whether there is an actual moral obligation to do so. And if one does bother to contemplate others’ miserable lives, what is to motivate one to potentially difficult action to improve their situation? Here, as a *partial* answer to this question, the role that shared human nature can play will be examined. Appealing to nature is indeed a thorny issue (and Modernity can be interpreted as a “breakdown in the accepted order of nature” (Toulmin 1990, p. 170)), but it is undoubtedly more problematic to ignore it because “If we have no essential nature as human beings, how are we to understand the complaint that certain kinds of treatment are ‘dehumanizing’” (Antony 2000, p. 11)? The notion that there is a “nature” or essential human functions has historically provided important safeguards for human dignity and can be a bridging point between religion and development. Indeed, the natural law tradition has been a significant historical carrier of human rights (Pogge 2002, p. 54; Wolterstorff 2010).²⁷

However, before the role of nature is defended in conceptualizing human development (along with freedom and solidarity), cautions are necessary. This is because the category of

²⁷ However, understanding shared nature must be viewed as an ongoing, unfinished project, it cannot be closed down, and it cannot be owned by anyone or any particular group.

nature has also played the opposite role in undermining rights. Note this remarkable quote by Marx. Communism is:

the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and nature and between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution (in Lukes 1993, p. 27).

Communism elevated the species level over the individual and “discerned” laws of history that would accelerate the evolution of the entire human *species*—but not in a way that would safeguard the dignity of each of its members. In the strength of this belief in an evolutionary progress that supplants *homo sapiens* with the superior species *homo sovieticus*, Communism ran roughshod over human rights and anyone and any concepts that hindered this advance. In fact, the old version of humanity *should* be replaced. The point to be taken from this is that an appropriation of the concept of human nature is not without the need for very careful qualifications. However, an approach that overemphasizes freedom can fall prey to similar abuses as there are few safeguards for action guidance. Similarly, an approach that focuses on communal norms can also fall prey to racism or other ideologies and be equally dangerous if these identities are viewed as absolutes.

The problems here are profound and show how precarious the rationality behind notions of *advancing* human development really is and that this requires a potentially perilous leap of faith. Reflection on even the relatively uncontroversial domain of human rights can make this point plain:

Human rights theories point beyond actual conditions of existence—beyond the “real” in the sense of what has already been realized—to the possible, which is viewed as a deeper moral reality (Donnelly 2003, p. 15).²⁸

This could apply perhaps equally well to capability development. The author then goes on to say,

Human rights ultimately rest on a social decision to act as though such “things” existed—and then, through social action directed by these rights to make real the world they envision (Donnelly 2003, p. 21).

But if “human nature is a social project more than a presocial given” caution must be exercised. The lesson of Communism is not the complete rejection of this statement, but to qualify it, that much more serious attention to what is “within the possibilities of the natural” must be taken when “envisioning” the advancement of human nature. Visions without being grounded in empirical reality can be dangerous hallucinations. Speaking to this very dilemma under Communism, Nobel Laureate Czeslaw Milosz writes:

A man may persuade himself, by the most logical reasoning, that he will greatly benefit his health by swallowing live frogs; and, thus rationally convinced, he may swallow a first frog, then the second; but at the third his stomach will revolt (Milosz 1981, p. xiii).

This example shows that human rights (or development of various capabilities) do not rest merely on social decisions to act as though such “things” exist, though such decisions are, indeed, necessary to activate concerns for these. (Social decisions are the proximate, but not their ultimate source.) Their existence must be real, or the decisions will be, in time, tragically falsified. Having registered these cautions about how the concept of human nature can be abused, this section will demonstrate how this neglected category can be retrieved in a way relevant for modern human development concerns.

²⁸ One of the sobering maxims of Communism was “everything is possible”. This began as a triumphant phrase, but ended up as a piece of dark humour.

The first feature of shared nature and its diverse functions is Aristotle's well-known notion that humans are social animals.²⁹ The house and its extension, the *polis*, are not merely social conventions; humans are *naturally* amiable, pairing, and bonding. Though this sounds like the previous category of solidarity/communion (it is), it is being viewed here from its universal perspective. This means that an individual who chooses (even freely and "rationally") to pursue only self-interest, and not other interest as well, is functioning in a defective, a characteristically non-human manner and there is incontrovertible empirical evidence that well-being is fundamentally relational (Holt-Lunstad, Smith et al. 2010). Humans universally require non-universal concrete, particular, relationships to be happy and healthy, to fulfil their existence, and this requires enduring human structures of solidarity, warmth, and meaning.³⁰ And these relationships are not merely instrumentally valued—*others must be genuinely valued in their own right*. If this is the case, then well-being or proper human functioning, and thus the aim of human development, cannot be conceived adequately as the exercise of individual freedoms, it must also be the exercise of communion or solidarity. Doing full justice to the sphere of the social is not well characterized by describing individual freedoms being "inescapably qualified" (Sen's phrase), as if this is something to be escaped from if only humans could!

But if humans are naturally social, they are not necessarily or correctly so, meaning that social tendencies are open, shaped and misshaped by human choice and social conventions. The expression of social nature, while intrinsic for well-being, can nonetheless be defectively expressed especially if human development is the explicit aim. However, this

²⁹ Natural social inclination was emphasized even more strongly by Aquinas, but in terms of both the human-God and the human-human dimensions (Keys 2006, p. 24). This is very similar to Orthodoxy's sustained emphasis on the equal priority of both of the Great Commandments. Martha Nussbaum cites modern Thomism as a "relative" of her Aristotelian based version of the Capabilities Approach (Nussbaum 2000, p. xiii).

³⁰ Furthermore, the importance of secure relationships is not limited to childhood—it never ends. One of the most comprehensive studies ever performed on well-being over a lifetime (a Harvard-led study that tracked 268 men over 72 years) concluded: "the only thing that really matters in life are your relationships to other people" (WHO 2011).

is where the *second* feature of the diversity of shared human functions can be brought in as a balance. Injustice can be thought of as defective social functioning, and is defective largely because others' human functions remain unfulfilled in one's relations of responsibility. For instance, a family relationship is understood as morally defective where more resources are consistently given to males, rather than females, such that other critical functionings such as literacy or adequate nutrition are denied to some. There is a relatively uncontroversial "minimum content of natural law", a cluster of basic goods and functions "without which human beings and societies as we know them cannot flourish" (Keys 2006, p. 54). The proper or moral expression of the human *social* function can be tested by whether it brings about the full range of human functionings in others *for whom one is responsible*.

To summarize this account so far, it has shown that "nature" provides a basis for solidarity in two ways. First, by showing that humans are naturally relational; humans need to and actually enjoy living in communities and experiencing "caring-for", not only being "cared-for". This is relatively uncontroversial but it is necessary to note that this relational function is necessarily concrete and not an abstract property. But the second role of nature was that the *healthy* or morally correct exercise of this social function of "caring-for" is tested by how other critical human functions are, or are not, provided for in one's *relations of responsibility*. Nussbaum's list can provide a good baseline for this.

However, it is important to note that this account has not yet provided an adequate ethical basis for *human* development, but only *political* ethics. Human development presupposes not just a moral obligation to one's friends and relations, one's *polis* or one's nation, but to *all*. Development ethics must strive to make sense of, justify, and further enhance *this* sense of obligation, and not neglect the others (agency, solidarity of the bounded type) that are also important. The above account of the various dimensions of human functioning

does provide limited insight as to *why* solidarity might be expressed (humans are relational animals) and even *how* it should be expressed (by the development of the diverse human functions), but it provides an insufficient basis for the extended *who* implied in human development. The sense of obligation to develop “each” person’s critical human functions might be felt only for one’s localized community, which is why the diverse functioning argument does not help much.³¹ With this recognition the *third* major role that nature plays can be examined and this is expanding the radius of solidarity to the human community.

Amartya Sen hints at a basis for solidarity that is not the result of or grounded in the choices of the individual. He cautiously mentions the *possibility* (notice *not* moral duty) “of recognizing the relevance of our shared humanity in making the choices we face” (Sen 1999, p. 283). But such references to the relevance of “shared humanity” are extremely rare and are highly qualified. However, they are significant and going in the right direction, which is away from individual choice as the exclusive source of ethical value. But this raises the question: if shared humanity is indeed a source of solidarity that is “right before our eyes”, as it were, why does it seem to be “hidden in plain sight”? Why is this not better recognized and acted upon?³²

The notion that all humans share a nature and that this is a ground for universal ethical obligation, while weakly asserted by Sen is strongly asserted and fundamental in EO. Humans exercise choice and participate in concrete expressions of community within the shared medium of an essential human nature that is a basis of unity, a nature that calls for

³¹ It does provide *some* moral obligation. Nussbaum’s argument that the existence of human abilities “exerts a moral claim that they should be developed” is correct and can be affirmed from the perspective of natural theology/law. But a principal concern is how to expand the reach and intensity of these moral claims.

³² Postmodernism’s rejection of structures or foundations is one reason; these are not unlinked to illegitimate appeals to “human nature” as a means of subjugation (e.g. slavery as natural).

respect and should not be allowed to fall into disrepair in any of its persons or any of its functions. Universally shared human nature commands respect and is a basis for human rights and capability development and thus is a powerful basis of cosmopolitan solidarity. This understanding is, however, not given to humans in the same way that humans understand that the square root of nine is three, or predict that Haley's Comet will appear in 2061. It takes a hermeneutical or narrative tradition to gain this understanding. While a closely shared human nature is an empirical fact rooted in humanity's closely shared genetic heritage, perceiving this as an imperative for human development is, however, unfortunately not given in nature. Humanity's closely shared nature is an "under interpreted" concept and needs to be situated in a larger narrative in order to make this fact morally relevant and actionable. This is how EO views nature (based on its Trinitarian theological anthropology) and this is a case where the hermeneutical and positive sciences overlap and complete each other.

Amartya Sen can shore up his own sources of solidarity by developing this theme of shared human nature that he briefly mentions. The notion of a source of values in nature not arising from human choice can lead not only to a stronger notion of solidarity, but point the way to finding value in nature as such (e.g. non-human nature). This latter point can be important for increasing the ecological sensitivity of the CA.³³ These themes can be built upon, but not without relaxing the supremacy of individual freedom as the hegemonic value in human development.

More so than Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum has sought to clarify the values inhering in the CA. She writes that the fundamental idea of the CA is the "principle of each person's capability". This principle entails that "an organic good for the group is unacceptable if it

³³ For example, if all value is in individual choice, it is hard to see how non-human nature, how endangered species and rainforests, can have any intrinsic value (Rolston-III 1989). This points to a severe limitation in any *exclusive* focus on humans as the source of values.

does not do good for the members taken one by one” (Nussbaum 2000, p. 188). EO agrees with this, as long as this is not over simplistically understood such that at critical (but non-exceptional) times, persons may need to sacrifice for others. This occurs for parents, for example, with the arrival of a new child and the significant requirements at this key juncture so that the child will not experience a life of *permanent* acute capability failure. Persons are ends, but also are means to others’ functioning, especially at critical times of vulnerability.

This mention of the family however points to cases where Nussbaum can sound as if there is no intrinsic good whatsoever to the “organic” dimension of existence.³⁴ Nussbaum writes that “the family has no moral standing ... it is persons who have moral standing” (Nussbaum 2000, p. 181). This formulation of the nature of persons is alien to Orthodoxy and many religions beyond Christianity, and shows the Western individualism inherent in the approach.

Staniloae, referring to John Chrysostom writes about the basic social ontology even behind that of the family:

for each of our members has both a particular and a common activity, and likewise there are in us two kinds of beauty [or good]: one which is peculiar to each member, and another which is common to all (Staniloae 1980, p. 59).³⁵

This is referring to humanity’s shared nature as a basis for solidarity but reflects the idea that there is more to well-being (even if there is not less) than just the “principle of each person”. The CA is sometimes called “ethical individualism” (Robeyns 2005; 2006). In

³⁴ And Sen, in general, appears even less optimistic than Nussbaum about the role of group identities (Sen 2006).

³⁵ The early Fathers were conscious of this “ontological” move towards giving greater importance to the individual person by balancing the overwhelming claims of the “species” (shared nature) realm, or the community (*polis*) of the Greeks.

EO the principle of each person's capability is radically affirmed³⁶ but also the shared "organic" dimension which is also essential to conceptualize and assess human well-being.³⁷ Staniloae's formula was more subtle still and reflects not just two, but three dimensions: persons—in voluntary communion—within the medium of a shared nature. Human development cannot be adequately conceptualized as the property of individuals and valuable functionings taken separately, nor just of persons in communitarian relations, nor primarily in terms of shared nature, but all of these as mutually implicative and necessary for human development.

This formulation helps explain why the union of the family has such standing in Orthodoxy and is generally considered the highest (but inadequate) "icon" of the Trinity (Cabasilas 1974, p. 46; Staniloae 2003, p. 39) and is "in nature" as Aristotle also taught.³⁸ The family "structure of being together" (Ricoeur's term) illustrates perhaps most clearly the *summum bonum* of existence because it gathers together the three values in a supreme way: it is a voluntary commitment, respecting the free choice and dignity of the *persons* involved; it is profound and intimate *communion* that is based on love, mutual respect and mutual sacrifice; it is a sacred commitment taking place within a complex unity of shared human *natures*—male and female, and is in turn generative of other natures in procreation. Such communion of difference between the sexes is all the more profound because the ultimate unity is not of exactly identical natures, but of a beneficial diversity within the one human nature that exists as both male and female. This bond is said to be "sacramental",

³⁶ In the Orthodox view of the Trinity, there is a relative priority of freedom where personal diversity is preeminent over essential unity (Meyendorff 1979, p. 184).

³⁷ Orthodox in general, including Staniloae, employs a Russian term, "sobornicity" to describe this, which is a "true organic unity and plurality" (Staniloae 1980, p. 221).

³⁸ However, the family is not in nature for Orthodoxy in the way that Aristotle and most of the Classical world taught, and that is of structured inequality and subordination. Nussbaum rightly argues that the family as "existing in nature" has often been abused by custom and tradition to subordinate women, but she also argues that "nothing follows" from the existence of actual biological tendencies and we correct them as we do faulty eyesight (Nussbaum 2000, p. 254). This is a poor analogy because nearsightedness is *always* a defect; surely being in family relations is not always a defect even for Nussbaum!

holy, and not merely instrumental to the good of persons taken separately. Such bonds constitute the well-being of persons and the healthy continuance of the human race through offspring and the marriage bond exists as a sacred “space” for *their* needs as well.

Affirming the family as an intrinsically valued “organic” unit, intended by nature, emphatically does not mean it cannot be criticized. The relational function of humans is naturally structured within the parameters of the family,³⁹ but this does not mean (as with all functionings) that it may not be perversely expressed. The proper functioning of the organic social unity of the family must be scrutinized in terms of its contribution to the well-being of each person (and their respective functions) within the circumference of the given unity.⁴⁰ But just as organic communions must be critiqued for their contribution to the well-being of persons, individual freedom must be critiqued for its contribution to the relational matrices of personal existence, to the concrete expressions of solidarity that gave and give it life. Thus every organic unity has a spiritual function to contribute to the well-being of those within—a dimension that is well-recognized. But what is not so well understood is that every unity has a moral responsibility also to those *without*. This is why Chrysostom argued that the key educational role of the family (the most fundamental institution of humankind, and shaping all others) with the mother as the chief pedagogue, was to instil a universal and inclusive love of humankind, of *agape*, versus a more exclusive love, *eros* (Spidlik 1986, p. 162).⁴¹ This is also a fundamental role of the Church. Thus every organic unity has a bi-directional ethical horizon, inward and

³⁹ Monks are an exception to this form, but they are understood to exist in even more profound communion with God and in their communities.

⁴⁰ Here an analogy from the political realm can help. Just as the “constitution” in terms of the fundamental agreement about ordering society gives shape to the excellences of the citizens in Aristotle’s politics (and who is excluded), so marriage as a structure or institution can vary and give rise to different understandings of the roles within. The Christian view of marriage is clearly *mutual* submission.

⁴¹ This can perhaps help explain why the Apostle James argued that pure religion is to care for the orphans and widows. Creation and especially familial relations provide a form of “grace” or support for well-being or adequate human functioning. The role of the Church and faith is to be those graces for those for whom these creational supports have failed. The idea that grace is in nature, and particularly in the family as a vehicle for well-being, makes sense of this.

outward. This is the “communitarian cosmopolitanism” principle which stands in conscious contrast to both the abstract cosmopolitanism of Kantian liberalism, and the communitarian-ism whose moral horizons are often truncated. This principle will be further elaborated in various ways in this thesis.

For the religious believer, there are further, and precisely in their quality as religious, more *compelling* reasons to engage in human development. There are sources of moral accountability “external” as it were to the subjective individual will. Persons are accountable to God, to scripture (and traditions of interpretation), to human nature itself (in EO), and to a concrete community and the force of role models within that community. A cosmopolitan ethic is at the very core of the Great Commandments, one that implies not merely the “do no harm” ethic of JS Mill, but positive moral obligation to those outside the traditional lines of loyalty. Thus, Christian faith can be a profound source of motivation for what Kant called “imperfect obligations”, where it is not clear exactly who could be held accountable for a failure to act (Rainbolt 2000). The Samaritan parable places imperfect obligations as a, if not *the*, central religious duty for all Christians (Kleinig 1976; Mack 1980; McFarland 2001). And imperfect obligations are closely related to, if not at the core of, human development (Sen 2009, pp. 372-376).

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter examined Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach to human development in light of the post-communist development challenges discussed in chapter three. Sen’s approach was then “read” through a conception of personhood inspired by the Trinitarian notion of person, communion, and shared nature that has been developed in dialogue with development studies. There appear to be good reasons why development as theory-practice requires all three of these as intrinsically valuable, even on secular terms. Sen’s

agency orientation is helpful, but human development cannot be adequately conceptualized in terms of an expanse of freedoms *simpliciter*. It requires concrete communion, but also the cosmopolitan perspective that shared nature brings.

Behind this concern, there is the practical need for development to be grounded in something more substantial than individual human choice alone, including the possibility of shared nature and religious values to motivate and guide action towards solidarity. This is important because if the poor are increasingly conceptualized as agents of their own development, and the poor are largely religious, it could be disastrous for development studies to ignore or undermine this. Sen's focus on individual choice risks ignoring the real, operative, springs of human agency.

But it is important not to go overboard with criticisms of Sen's form of the CA,⁴² failing to recognize its genuine achievements. Anyone concerned with human well-being, religious or otherwise, can be thankful to Sen's pioneering work with the CA. As Sabina Alkire notes, Sen's painstaking and decades-long work for the UN adoption of the CA Human Development Reports has shifted attention away from a narrow technical or engineering rationality to include explicit ethical rationality in development studies (Alkire 2005, p. 125). And though Sen largely omits this in his *oeuvre*, religion can be among the valuable beings and doings a person can choose (Alkire 2002). Nobel Economist Kenneth Arrow has noted that Sen's life work has shown considerable unity, showing special concern for the welfare of individuals in situations of poverty and offering leading analyses both within the domains of economics and moral philosophy (Arrow 1999, p. 172). That his concern for individual well-being is indeed an important unit of analysis for a viable development

⁴² There is much more internal diversity to the CA than can be reported here (and the same is true of EO vis-à-vis Dumitru Staniloae). It is important to keep in mind that this study is trying to model a dialogue and knowingly, if reluctantly, has kept almost entirely with Sen's version of the CA with some recourse to Nussbaum. This is to keep the lines of argumentation from becoming cumbersome. Some versions of the CA stand in fact much closer to the arguments of this thesis (Deneulin forthcoming).

ethics can be affirmed—the question of course is if this is sufficient.⁴³ Freedom to become one's own person can become freedom "to do one's own thing" and thus Western individualism (Cowen and Shenton 1996, p. 453). But this is surely not Sen's aim. The main point is, as David Crocker points out, that a "development ethic must be constructed in a dialectical relation with empirical investigation into what causes and impedes (good) development as well as what produces and prevents poverty, famine, endemic hunger, exploitation, sexism, and other development failures" (Crocker 1992, p. 587). The insights of development studies, many of which Sen helped mainstream, are neither obvious nor trivial. They can help religious faithful fulfil their own obligations towards neighbour love. And an important aspect of this is informed contribution in policy debates, advocating on behalf of the poor and vulnerable.

The conclusion is that the CA can aid in an EO theology of human development provided it relaxes its assumptions about the supremacy of individual freedoms as *the* basis for HD. Indeed, the argument has been that the capability approach itself can be enriched by including these further dimensions of communion and shared nature that the Trinitarian social scientific picture of the person has brought into view. In light of this, these last three chapters should be viewed as an integrated argument for how supernatural revelation (Trinity) can stand near natural revelation (human development) but still illuminate it and contribute to it even on its own terms. It is necessary now to investigate the other foundational dogma of EO, the Incarnation.

⁴³ There are cases where for practical or operational reasons, it may be best to analyze well-being at the individual level. But this should be recognized as a tactical move, not an ontological one, not about the *nature* of human development.

5. INCARNATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

While the first three chapters of this thesis investigated the Trinity in relation to human development, the rest of this thesis will investigate the Incarnation in a similar fashion. These two dogmas are, in fact, the two pillars of EO (Staniloae 1994, p. 71). Like the Trinity, the Incarnation is central to salvation; the Incarnation however, has its own characteristics and calls for distinct lines of analysis.

The Incarnation is the basis for what is called in EO *theosis* or deification. *Theosis*, though based on the Incarnation, was not a term invented by the Church Fathers, but was borrowed from the Greek Classical authors, for whom *theosis* as flight from the world was often dominant.¹ These “gnostic” temptations to despise the material world (Lee 1987; Gunton 1998) linger and infect almost all Christian traditions. With this problematic in mind, this chapter will examine how the Incarnation and *theosis* express, but can more fully be conceptualized as, a multidimensional theology of human development. This will be done primarily by examining Maximus’s framework of *theosis* as the movement from Being to Well-being and Eternal-being to illuminate EO’s understanding of “change for the better”. All of this will be done in continued dialogue with Amartya Sen’s capability approach to human development.

¹ Plato gives the famous formulation in the *Theatatus*: “to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as possible; and to fly away is to become like God as far as this is possible; and to become like him is to become holy, just, and wise” (in Spidlik 1986, p. 56). This is especially the case for monastic “polity and ideology, its foundation upon the notion that ‘the Kingdom of God is not of this world’” (Meyendorff 1979, p. 66). This of course can be counterbalanced with “Thy kingdom come ... on Earth as in Heaven” of the Lord’s Prayer. Staniloae points out that the early Church Fathers “took over the notion of a matter opposed to the divine Logos” but that Maximus the Confessor later rectified this (Staniloae 2000, p. 45).

5.1 *Theosis*: deification as ‘humanification’

The touchstone for the EO understanding of the Incarnation is Athanasius: “God became man so that man might become god”, a statement based on Psalm 82:6. Staniloae cites St. Gregory’s stronger and more paradoxical version that “humans have received the order to become god” (Staniloae 2000, p. 84). Justin Martyr in the second century writes: “it is proved that all human beings are deemed worthy of becoming gods and of having the power to become sons of the Most High” (in Russell 2004). The Second Epistle to Peter (2:4) notes that God gave great and precious promises so that “you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world”. *Theosis* is the “consensus” doctrine that unites the varying parts of Orthodoxy and distinguished it from the West (Meyendorff 1979, p. 4). For Orthodoxy, the Incarnation concerns *theosis* and *theosis* involves movement, an “extension of the good”, or as the Eastern Fathers put it, “change for the better” (Anastasios 2003). Staniloae called it the “human being’s will to develop correctly in harmony with all his fellow humans, with the whole of reality, and with the highest of reality as a whole” (Staniloae 2000, p. 31).

In a magisterial study on deification, Norman Russell argues that there were four approaches to deification, the nominal, analogical, ethical, and realistic. These developed separately and only were later combined through the creative syntheses of Maximus the Confessor. It is not important to detail these except to say that Staniloae primarily followed the Cappadocian approach, which emphasized the agency and ethical aspects of deification (Russell 2004, p. 9). *Theosis* is a journey on the “road to ethical perfection” (Staniloae 1994, p. 163) and implies the exercise of “one’s own capabilities, one’s own power to grow in goodness and wisdom” (Spidlik 1986, p. 87). Staniloae was also influenced by the later Fathers, principally Maximus the Confessor, but also Gregory

Palamas. With these varying emphases, in the opinion of Staniloae scholar Emil Bartos, he kept a balanced approach and did not let any one theme dominate (Bartos 2002, p. 210).

5.2 Change for the Better: Image to Likeness

The developmental logic of EO can be seen in the structure of the *imago dei*, whereby the image of God in humans is not only a basis for human dignity, but as a dynamically conceived theological anthropology. The “image” of god is a *potential* to be developed. It is a capacity given to all that has to be activated into the “likeness”, or an actualization of certain potentials. This terminology (image→likeness) is based on Genesis 1: 26-27 and while the exegetical foundations of this may be contested (Gunton 1998, p. 196-97), it is the spiritual picture behind it, of human development, or “human becomings” that is important. Not all Fathers made extensive use of this distinction, but it became synonymous with deification (*theosis*) and thus Orthodoxy, over time. Emil Bartos avers that “image refers to humankind’s dignity, while the likeness to our ethical duty”. The image is a gift, while the likeness is a task, a mission (Bartos 2002, p. 221).²

However, within the framework of this basic structure, interpretations vary. If image represents potential and likeness represents the actualization, what features are to be cultivated and actualized? Some argue that the image of God represents that which is “highest” in humans, namely intellect, or some champion freedom—and that these special capacities should be singled out and developed. However, authorities spanning from Irenaeus, Maximus the Confessor, and Staniloae (and this seems to be the consensus view), view the *imago dei* as residing in the human *composite*. This composite nature means that

² More specifically, Bartos argues that Staniloae balanced the ethical and the realist approaches (Bartos 1999). This can be interpreted to mean that Staniloae affirms both the role of human action (Bartos 1999, p. 10), but also the participation in the divine energies (more on this in chapter nine). According to Bartos, deification includes, but is “much more than simply the imitation of Christ” (Bartos 2002, p. 207).

the very good of human nature is *multidimensional* and cannot be reduced to one element (i.e. spirit *or* body); thus the human body, corporeality, is part of the *imago dei* just as much as is freedom or rationality. This conclusion was a considerable achievement in the face of much ancient thought (Doceticism and Gnosticism) for which materiality as such was seen as the source of ill-being, un-reality (Lee 1987).

Taking this line of thinking further: there is a rationality and intentionality and goodness in created matter—including biological and emotional processes (Staniloae 2003, p. 86) as well as in the realm of freedom. This is part of a theme ever present in EO, and that is that physical nature itself is not alien to grace:

There is a close interconnection between the biological and the spiritual; one realm influences the other both in the decline and in the restoration of man. Here a vast field of research is possible on the details of the interdependence between the biological and the spiritual (Staniloae 1980, p. 81).

Staniloae is however particularly insistent on the rational nature of spirituality. Thus “the pious one is rational ... and irrationality is a “stunting of the spirit, or of the mind, or of love” (Staniloae 2003, p. 100), but he is also insistent at the same time on the goodness of the body and emotions.³ He is willing to correct, albeit gently, his master, Maximus the Confessor, in this regard.⁴ This is because *theosis* strengthens human nature in *all* its capacities, not just the intellect,⁵ and this is founded upon the Incarnation—that Christ took upon and healed or restored in principle *all* human capacities. As Irenaeus wrote long ago, “Wherefore also He [Christ] passed through every stage of life, restoring to all communion with God” (Stevenson 1987, p. 119). Restoration to God is not conceived as a

³ Staniloae: “This element of bodily affectivity or emotionality which grows from the biological side isn't condemnable, and we must not struggle against it, because it constitutes the basis of our growth in the spiritual life” (Staniloae 2003, p. 86).

⁴ Maximus argued, according to Staniloae, that all natural passions will cease after this life. Staniloae argues it is better not to say that they will cease, but to say that their energy will be put in service of the human spirit, of relational existence, instead of being cast downward to sensual gratification (Staniloae 2003, p. 87).

⁵ Flowing from Augustine but finding expression in Boethius then *par excellence* with the beatific vision in Aquinas, it is the “nous”, the intellect that is emphasized, and not the body. This derives not only from Plato, but also from Aristotle via the *Nichomachean Ethics* (Bradshaw 2004, p. 256).

flight from nature, but a restoration to nature, to human well-being in all its dimensions and powers.

While *theosis* (image→likeness), is movement toward the good, or toward God, this demands further clarification. An improved picture can be obtained by analyzing how *theosis* is thwarted through sin and the relation of sin to underdevelopment. Sin, or better selfishness (not to be confused with Protestant notions of original sin), dulls receptivity, dulls activity, it is *against nature* and weakens nature's true potentials. "We believe that the passivity to which the image is reduced lies in the fact that it cannot of itself bring its potencies into act along the proper path" (Staniloae 2000, p. 91). Sin directs, or is the direction of, human energies away from the good, away from that which is truly according to nature. The structures or initial capacities (the image) are essentially the same in sin/selfishness, but activated through human agency in a way contrary to nature's intentions and this diminishes and corrupts the strength of nature's functions. Because shared nature is such a powerful concept in Staniloae, the non-response to another's need is seen as unnatural, a self-contradiction or self-diminution. Staniloae writes:

Anyone who responds negatively to the appeal of another and does not see what is limitless [ultimately valuable] in the other still preserves the capacity of making a response; it is only that he is responding in a way that is contrary to his own nature (Staniloae 2000, p. 91).

The Incarnation is the basis for this return to nature. Christ is the archetype of humanity, the New Adam, the restoration of the "image" to its true nature in actuality (in love), which means that human nature as such has received afresh the potential to be renewed. This is the basis for viewing the human being as a "creature who has received the order to become god" (Staniloae 2000, p. 89) and to become god is to live naturally. This is modelled on and empowered by Christ as the one who restored the image to its grandeur. And union

with God or *theosis* is inextricably linked, and inconceivable without union with one's neighbour; more will be said on this later.

“Image” is thus the ontological structure of various potentialities/functions, while “likeness” is not only the final state of deification, but the entire journey, the “entire path along which the image develops through the agency of the human will stimulated and assisted by the grace of God” (Staniloae 2000, p. 89).⁶ But it is vital to mention that while this ontological structure is indeed a structure, it is an open and dynamic one. John Meyendorff notes that “The central theme, or intuition of Byzantine theology [EO] is that man's nature is not a static, “closed” autonomous entity, but a dynamic reality” (Meyendorff 1979, p. 2). Staniloae puts it more succinctly: “man cannot reach perfection if he does not reflect nature and is at work on it” (Staniloae 2000, p. 1). This fact is important to emphasize in light of the previous chapter's focus on shared nature and its dimensions as a basis for conceptualizing the person—that it is not a static view of human structures as in scholasticism. This will be discussed further in Chapter seven.

There will be much more to say on this later, but *theosis* in Orthodoxy presupposes the exercise of effective human agency, and that grace comes not to thwart agency, but to empower it towards acts of solidarity with the aim of restoring the disrepair of human nature. Thus grace is also involved in nature itself—they are not separated as has appeared to be the case in much of Western theology historically. “In the East, grace has always been linked closely to the nature of man and especially his soul” (Staniloae 2000, p. 84).⁷

⁶ This divine assistance for human agency is “synergy”, which will be discussed in chapter 9.

⁷ The separation of social ethics and theology cited in the introduction is an example of this separation of grace and nature.

Salvation or *theosis* thus concerns positive change, or development. As mentioned previously, Archbishop Anastasios, Patriarch of Albania, has asserted that “‘change for the good’ is the core of our Christian heritage” (Anastasios 2003, p. 156). The early Christian approach is set in conscious distinction from the Platonic philosophical tradition that sees change as a form of decay.⁸ Even Aristotle’s *entelechy*⁹ was towards a fixed *telos*, an already given and unchangeable form gradually realized in material life. Deviation from or progress beyond this form was unthinkable and the Aristotelian “ideal is clearly one of complete absence of change of any sort” (Lloyd 1968, p. 303). Similarly, reason was, for the Stoics, conformity and submission to the *logos*, the unchanging pattern within nature.¹⁰ Progress in the lights of Orthodoxy is not towards a closed end, but is never-ending, and this requires malleable, open structures. St. Gregory of Nyssa formalized the doctrine of *epektasis* to capture this never ending change or movement (that involves human creativity). About Gregory of Nyssa’s idea of “perpetual progress” or *epektasis*, Patristic (and Staniloae) scholar Lucian Turcescu writes:

[R]ather than upholding a static vision of God in eternity, Gregory believes in an unending journey of discovery of the infinite—[this] ranks him even above the great Plato who interpreted change in only the negative sense of deterioration from better to worse. For Gregory, change can also connote progress from the inferior to the superior (Turcescu 2005, p. x).

Only in light of the Greek classical background (that underappreciated both change and thus material existence and its “flux”) can the significance of salvation understood as

⁸ Bradshaw argues that a major difference between East and West, already present in Augustine and perpetuated in Aquinas, is a lack of categories for this notion of perpetual progress (Bradshaw 2004, p. 256-7).

⁹ Entelechy, in Greek *entelécheia*, was coined by Aristotle. According to one prominent interpreter, Aristotle invents the word by combining *entelēs* (complete, full-grown) with *echein* (= hexis, to be a certain way by the continuing effort of holding on in that condition), while at the same time punning on *endelecheia* (persistence) by inserting *telos* (completion). This is a three-ring circus of a word, at the heart of everything in Aristotle’s thinking, including the definition of motion (Sachs 1995, p. 245).

¹⁰ Consider the following by a noted scholar of early church history and late antiquity: “Of all elements of Christian teaching, there was none more remarkable than the notion of progress and none more incongruous with the thought and practice of classical antiquity” (Cochrane 1944, p. 266).

holistic “change for the better”, defined as the heart of the Christian message, be fully seized.

These themes of change for the better, or the “image to the likeness” are fundamental to the teaching of the Church Fathers,¹¹ and are given modern expression by Staniloae. There is no doubt they need fuller expression in EO—but the teaching is there, fundamental, and not part of a theologically “liberal” or modern deviation from ancient truth. Furthermore, this “change for the better” that involves human agency in interaction with dynamic structures, is constitutive of salvation—it is not a mere by-product or spill over effect. However, *theosis* receives a more profound treatment by Maximus the Confessor. Maximus conceptualized *theosis* as the movement from Being to Well-being, and on to Eternal-being—a framework that Staniloae also employs.

5.3 Maximus’s Triadic Movement

As mentioned, a decisive influence on Staniloae is Maximus the Confessor (580-662), a Church Father recognized by both the Eastern and the Western Church. Maximus was in many ways *the* theologian of unity and diversity (Törönen 2007), a theme relevant both for the Trinity, but also the Incarnation.¹² Maximus also formulated, in opposition to Origen,¹³ the definitive idea that *theosis* is a movement from Being to Well-being to Eternal-being, or, as some prefer, existence to good existence to eternal existence. The former terminology based on the usage of Maximus scholar Lars Thunberg will be used;

¹¹ And especially the three great “ecumenical teachers”: Basil the Great (330?-379), Gregory the Theologian (329-390), and John Chrysostom (354-407).

¹² The two diverse natures—God and man—make up the one person of Christ. For Maximus and Staniloae, the idea of a union without confusion is critical to safeguard freedom and is the basis of communion.

¹³ Just how important this general thematic of positive change is in Orthodoxy can be seen by the Church’s treatment of Origen (184/185 – 253/254), the Christian Platonist. Origen, a brilliant theologian and highly respected in the ancient world, was nonetheless ultimately condemned as heretical, precisely for rejecting this notion of movement or change for the better. Origen’s thought, like Plato, held that motion or change is an instability and is a result of sin or the Fall, and bodily existence and the material world is the punishment thereof. The definitive repudiation of this was made by Maximus the Confessor.

the latter terminology is employed only when quoting Staniloae directly.¹⁴ The “well-being” terminology is employed to highlight the potential overlap with development studies and the social sciences.¹⁵ Obviously the critical question is whether the overlap is substantial, or merely semantic. The contention here is that while there will not be complete agreement between secular and spiritual understandings of development, there can be a significant “overlapping consensus” that can provide a basis for mutual enrichment. Thus, when EO and development studies discourse about well-being, they just *may* be talking about the same thing—namely the development of natural capacities, the employment of agency, the importance of relationships for human flourishing, cosmopolitan moral obligations, and the like. This is the case even if EO would situate this “natural” development in a broader framework that includes eternal life and other resources, namely Divine assistance. The following quote from Staniloae highlights many of the themes that will be unpacked:

Saint Maximus treats movement as a means given to creatures by God from the moment of their creation for the purpose of their achieving full union with him; it is, therefore, a movement that passes from existence [Being] bestowed as a gift to good existence [Well-being], which is acquired through the contribution their own will makes in actualizing their power of movement ... The power given to us by God has as its purpose that we put into real operation those natural powers of ours which have also been given to us by God; this process of putting them into real operation is nothing other than the movement stamped upon us and guided towards God, as towards the good proper to us, by our own will and consciousness (Staniloae 1994, p. 188).

Staniloae mentions movement and agency (the contribution of one’s own will) as a gift of God but for the purpose of the activation of natural human powers, among other themes implicated in *theosis*. Amid the lofty language of “union with God”, it is important to note that “the growth of the human spirit in power is an ethical growth, for due to the fact that no one can approach God as source of power unless he loves him as the good, growth

¹⁴ Thunberg actually uses Being, Well-being, Ever-being, but Eternal-being seems more consistent with natural language.

¹⁵ These terms are capitalized to signal their usage as technical terms in the Orthodox Triad. When well-being is used in its general sense as in development studies, it is lower-case. Often “flourishing” is used and these are treated synonymously.

in existence is a growth in the good” (Staniloae 1994, p. 193). This “growth in the good” has for its foundations the ontological structures given by God in creation. These fall under Maximus’s category of Being in the Being, Well-being, Eternal-being triadic progression.

5.3.1 **Being (Existence)**

Maximus’s schema parallels the image-likeness distinction, but uses more philosophical language than the Semitic idiom from Genesis. “Image” thus corresponds to Being, or existence, while the movement to “likeness” parallels that of the movement to Well-being and Eternal-being. Being or “image” can be viewed as potentiality, while Well/Eternal-being or “likeness” as the actualizing of potentialities. Admittedly, there can be no absolutely clear demarcation between these categories (there is a unity in the diversity), but the term Well-being has the distinguishing characteristic of involving human agency in the activation of human power or capacities given in the category of Being. Thus Well-being is fundamentally involved with the exercise of agency while Being can be interpreted as the ontological or creational structures given in nature.

But the category of Being does not just involve human beings, but all of creation. Thus the possibilities for human flourishing cannot be conceptualized in isolation from physical nature and environmental conditions. In EO as mentioned, humans are viewed as a microcosm and thus in continuity with all the elements (mineral, vegetable, animal, and celestial) in the universe, combining and building upon them, but transcending them all. Being is thus structured for its own development, its own transcendence. Humanity

therefore includes, but also surmounts the law-like nature of mineral and biological existence:¹⁶

This means that nature is structured in such a way that it leaves room for human interventions ... and that these laws are not predetermined to yield the most useful results all by themselves, but instead find their wholeness through the intervention of human freedom (Staniloae 2000, p. 47).

“Being” includes biological and other structures or foundations, but it also, and importantly, includes and interacts with human freedom. Staniloae argues “The basis for the entire greatness of the human’s person divine image lies in his freedom” (Staniloae 2000, p. 107). But this freedom is not unconditioned, it is dependent on and operates through both internal and external (environmental) structures, and in this category of Being, it is a not yet activated possibility.

This reflects the main idea mentioned before, that *both* material body and spiritual soul are included in the *imago dei*, and thus subject to the “beneficial movement” which is *theosis*. As Staniloae says, “the road to God passes through our humanization” (Staniloae 2000, p. 26) and this is multidimensional,¹⁷ incorporating biological processes in the domain of salvation. *Theosis* is not a negation of human natural capacities, but their completion towards the good which is characterized by a communion that respects the contribution of its individual members. This is a vision of a truly good and natural life, where “all the capacities of man are utilized for his healthy development” (Thunberg 1985, p. 59).¹⁸

¹⁶ The Incarnation “reset” as it were, human nature so that it can employ agency responsibly, that is according to nature and nature’s “reasons”, best understood at this point as “keeping the commandments”, that is, the two great commandments of God and neighbour love.

¹⁷ Archbishop Anastasios argues in a chapter titled “The Dynamics of Universal and Continuous Change” that “change for the better”, is the Orthodox ideal, and this “embraces everything, life in its entirety, in all its dimensions and meanings” (Anastasios 2003, p. 155).

¹⁸ For EO, the *imago-dei* is in human nature itself as creature, that is, as human qualities and their actualization. Contrast this with the position of Alan Torrance, who, remaining “loyal to a radical Barthian epistemology” (Rogobete 1997, p. 74) insists that the *imago dei* does not have to do with the natural state or capacities of persons (Torrance 1996). This is significant as Barth was the most important Protestant theologian of the twentieth century.

This language of fulfilment of natural capacities (given in Being) has remarkable overlap with development studies. As mentioned, DS focuses on the removal of obstacles that stand in the way of well-being. But DS asks another question, one more related directly to Maximus's category of "Being" and is reflection on what humans everywhere require for a decent, dignified life. This is not just items like shelter and nourishment, but is the question of valuable "beings and doings". What are the fundamental potentialities or natural functions (rooted in Being, humans' ontological constitution) that *merit* development or actualization? In DS in particular, there is sustained reflection and debate over *core* human functioning or abilities, and the consequent generation of development "lists" (Alkire 2002), of which Nussbaum's is one of the most well-known. These lists seek to capture the basic prerequisites and fundamental functions of good existence—and these lists are remarkably similar. The Chilean development economist Manfred Max-Neef called these "fundamental needs" and described them as *ontological* conditions in that they stem from the fundamental condition of being human.¹⁹ Nussbaum herself uses explicit "ontological" (Being), or normative structure, language: "The very being of these basic capabilities makes forward reference to functioning" (Nussbaum 1992, p. 228).

The main point here is that the structure of movement (capabilities to normative functioning) within the CA is similar to the image-likeness (or Being, Well-being) schema. This likely reflects a common Aristotelian background for EO (Tatakis 2007)²⁰ and the CA as well (Nussbaum 1992; Sen and Nussbaum 1993; Nussbaum 2000). Important is that choice is not exercised in a vacuum, but operates through the structures and groundwork of Being that is, at least in part, pre-established. Aristotle noted that "In general, all human beings seek not the way of their ancestors, but the good" (in Sen and Nussbaum 1993, p.

¹⁹ Max-Neef classifies the fundamental human needs as: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity and freedom (Max-Neef 1991; 1992, p. 18).

²⁰ Staniloae scholar Emil Bartos writes "Staniloae employs the optimistic Aristotelian structure" in place of the pessimistic Platonic-Origenist view (Bartos 1999, p. 125).

242) and offered a set of human functionings, or “spheres” of life where choice can be exercised well, or poorly, and thus become virtue or vice. These are not relative;²¹ they are not extractable merely from local tradition or practice. Martha Nussbaum brings this discussion up to date with her “neo-Aristotelian proposal” and offers the following list of “central human functional capabilities”. These are potentialities inherent in existence (or their preconditions—e.g. shelter) that are thought to be universal. These, in condensed version are:

- 1) **Life:** not dying prematurely;
- 2) **Bodily Health:** nourishment, shelter, reproductive health;
- 3) **Bodily Integrity:** movement, safety against assault, domestic violence; choice in matters of sexuality and reproduction;
- 4) **Senses, Imagination and Thought:** freedom of political, artistic, and religious expression;
- 5) **Emotions:** to love those who love and care for us; not having one’s emotional development blighted by trauma;
- 6) **Practical Reason:** being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one’s life;
- 7) **Affiliation:**
 - a. being able to recognize and show concern for other human beings;
 - b. having the social bases of self-respect; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others;
- 8) **Other Species:** being able to live with concern for and in the world of nature;²²
- 9) **Play:** being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities;²³

²¹ Despite the quote from Aristotle above, there is also ample evidence that Aristotle believed virtues were not universal but regime specific and shaped by one’s socio-political environment (Aristotle 1999). There is no reason why both cannot be true and Nussbaum deals with this issue by showing that these are *basic* dimensions, underspecified, that are fulfilled in differing ways in various cultural contexts.

²² Nussbaum notes that this dimension has been the most controversial (Nussbaum 2000, p. 80).

10) Control over One's Environment:

- a. **Political:** being able to participate effectively in choices that govern one's life;
- b. **Material:** having the right to hold property and seek employment on an equal basis with others.

Nussbaum argues that this list of central human functionings can, in terms of constitutional guarantees, serve as “as a bare minimum of what respect for human dignity requires” (Nussbaum 2000, p. 5). This approach does admit of lower and higher functionings (namely affiliation and practical reason) and threshold conditions. Nussbaum conceives this list as free from any metaphysical grounding and justifies this in terms of a procedure of “self-hermeneutics”. Nussbaum’s “modern” methodology for deriving her list will be investigated further in the next chapter.

There are profound areas of overlap here with Orthodoxy. Consider the “architectonic capabilities” of practical reason and affiliation, and that these correspond to Staniloae’s ultimate categories of person (agency) and communion (solidarity). And while Nussbaum grounds her approach in *self*-interpretation (not communal interpretation or Tradition) as mentioned, and is thus typically “liberal”, she still ends up with a shared nature defined by her list—somewhat similar to the three dimensions of the Orthodox Trinitarian anthropology.

The individualistic self-hermeneutical starting point, however, poses problems. Nussbaum, like Sen, grants intrinsic moral status only to individual persons—despite the presence of number seven (affiliation and equal worth) above. As was seen at the end of

²³ An important work for this dimension is Huizinga’s, *Homo Ludens*, or “playing man” which suggests that play is a necessary but insufficient condition for the generation of human culture (Huizinga 1955).

the previous chapter, “It is persons who have moral standing”—not any type of moral grouping, including the family (Nussbaum 2000, p. 251). The family and other social groups may have instrumental importance as the locus of a person’s development (after all, persons *are* relational), but it seems that no particular type or structure of relationship (including humanity itself as an organic unity) can have any intrinsic, and therefore permanent, significance.

This is why in the CA, relationships sometimes appear optional to existence, even (if somewhat less so) in Nussbaum’s version. “The appropriate goal of public policy is the capabilities of citizens to form such relationships, should they choose to do so” (Nussbaum 2000, p. 2-51). But what if they should not choose to do so? EO and many traditional approaches would view as defective a life that is devoid of relationships, and stable ones, even if one should freely choose this. Of course Orthodoxy would not say that governments should coerce relationships, but rather that Nussbaum’s retreat to the political approach is sidestepping important issues about well-being. Should humans choose to shun relationships, shun sociability, shun moral obligation in their various forms, there is a moral and ontological defect, and ultimately suffering will eventuate. This is because “communion of wills is the very good of human nature” (Thunberg 1985, p. 24) or the human good cannot be actualized as a property of individuals separately conceived—even should they freely choose this. This has been addressed in previous chapters, but the case must be pressed once more from a different angle, and that is the relational requirements for universal human development itself.

Being (according to Maximus) is the ontological structures or potentialities that lie hidden, as it were, in human nature—waiting to be unfolded.²⁴ Being could be thought of as the

²⁴ Also, environmental structures are included inasmuch as these are preconditions for human development.

realm of healthy development that is not entirely dependent on one's own *moral*²⁵ choices—but, paradoxically, it *can* be completely dependent on others'. The complex nature of this interdependency between the domains of Being (natural structures) and Well-being (agency) can be seen by examining more carefully the developmental needs of infants. Even prior to birth, discerned through an ultrasound, the femur of a baby “should” be within a certain range of centimetres; the amount of amniotic fluid in the womb “should” be within a certain range; the heartbeat rate is normal within a certain threshold, and myriad other points of data that give a picture of health. All of these are, in Maximus' approach, principles of Being, or what Lossky calls “norms of existence” (Lossky 1978; 1991). Science discovers and builds on these. The example of the infant is employed precisely to point out a profound interdependence between the domains of Being, where moral choice is not involved, with the domain of Well-being, where the moral choices of others are involved. The actions or inactions, attitudes, dispositions, of others, and especially parents, can alter the very structures of another being (Makinodan, Rosen et al. 2012). A mother excessively smoking (exercising a certain kind of free choice) leads to hypoxia in an infant (Sparrow, Chapman et al. 2012) and can impair the biological foundations of existence for another person—*forever*.

There are also profound *relational* requirements of infant development which were “discovered” (at least by the scientific community) in the Romanian orphanages which is yet another tragic result of Communism's playing willy-nilly with nature's structures.²⁶ It is now a commonplace that the normal development of infants, their very neurological structures, requires adequate and *stable* parental love, and from both parents (Gerhardt

²⁵ This is called *moral* choice because in very young children there is choice, but it cannot adequately be described as moral choice.

²⁶ “Many decades ago high mortality rates were observed among infants in custodial care (i.e., orphanages), even when controlling for pre-existing health conditions and medical treatment. Lack of human contact predicted mortality. The medical profession was stunned to learn that infants would die without social interaction” (Holt-Lunstad, Smith et al. 2010). These authors argue that this surprise came because of an *instrumental* view of human sociability in the human sciences.

2004). Parental love is essential to brain development in the early years of life and interactions between infants and their parents have serious and lasting consequences. And this begins even in pregnancy where familial stresses can adversely affect development. Normal genetic development is increasingly seen to be influenced by nurturing and environmental influences (Sparrow, Chapman et al. 2012).²⁷ Orthodoxy (as do many religions) views the family as fundamentally rooted in Being and meant to safeguard the structures of Being; it is not just another “lifestyle choice” (Davies, Berger et al. 1993). “Let marriage be held in honour among all” (Hebrews 13:4).

Furthermore, if there are no intrinsic values for organic identities or relations “close to home” to protect and nurture the development of vital functions, how can the case be made for a duty to the larger grouping, the “human family”—which (metaphor aside) seems to be the fundamental moral presupposition of HD? One can attempt a case on the basis of “the principle of each person as an end” alone, but it is an uphill battle where shared moral identities (including a metaphysical notion of shared nature) are rejected as mystical “organicism” (Nussbaum 2000, p. 247) and the only real value resides in individual rights or capabilities. If family as a moral unit (“the two shall become one flesh”) is just an antiquated metaphor, if moral communities have no intrinsically valued status, then freedom risks being without any roots or channels in human experience. As mentioned in the previous chapter, family and other group identities need to be critiqued based on their contribution to individual capabilities, beings and doings—but this does not mean they have no intrinsic moral value. Indeed, a fundamental question is, and this must be highlighted is: *whether the “principle of each person as an end” can be better served by*

²⁷ Nature fits in the category of Being; nurture in the category of Well-being—thus showing how these two interact and are mutually implicated.

*this principle alone, or by recognizing the organic nature of human lives and that these holistic entities are fundamental, and not merely instrumental for human development.*²⁸

While Amartya Sen would not go this far, one can see increasing tendencies in his work showing that human nature is structured for communion. Sen is very individualistic, but he has increasingly invoked a tradition from David Hume and Adam Smith that made the capacity for natural sympathy, “of feeling others people’s pain” (Sen 2009, *passim*), a foundation for morality. David Hume writes here, from his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, undoubtedly with Protestant views of total depravity in mind:

What surely, without the greatest absurdity cannot be disputed, that there is some benevolence, however small, infused into our bosom; some spark of friendship for human kind; some particle of the dove kneaded into our frame, along with the elements of the wolf and serpent (in Darwell 2003, p. 96).

This sympathetic foundation for other-regarding behaviour residing in creation is akin to Orthodoxy. And similar to Orthodoxy (but not in exactly the same way), Sen seeks to *extend* these “natural” sympathies in cosmopolitan directions, through reason.²⁹ For Sen, natural sympathy is a ground for benevolent action, but it is incomplete because it involves self-interest in the sense that “one person’s welfare is affected by the position of others’... for example a person can feel depressed at the sight of misery of others” (Sen 2009, p. 188). Sen offers another moral category sensibly titled “commitment”. In this category of commitment, it is less about *feeling* another’s pain, but more “being able to see reasons to help a person in pain (or suffering from any other serious adversity or deprivation)” (Sen 2009, p. 372). The basic obligation in this category of commitment is to ask what one can *reasonably* do to help another—even if another’s suffering is not affecting one. Sen thus

²⁸ And it is no argument to say that these organic entities are often abused; so are individual freedoms.

²⁹ For Orthodoxy (especially evident in Maximus and Staniloae), central to religion is to actually become more rational so that one will care more about, and take action for human development. However, EO (and other religions) can affirm in a strong or “ultimate” way what Sen can only suggest in a very weak way due to his emphasis on choice and individual reasoning.

appeals both to a natural tendency or human faculty for sympathy as a foundation for morality, but also reason as another faculty that is brought in to extend these other regarding actions as “commitment”.³⁰

However, Sen recognizes that there is a quite large gap between a reason for action (“I am, in fact, in a position to help that person”) and an actual duty to undertake action (“I must, in fact, help that person”). Sen sensibly and correctly asks: how strongly must a person take a reason for action for it to serve as a possible duty? This is the right question to be asking. However, the answer for Sen in effect is, “be more rational”, and, part of this is what he calls an “escape from isolation”. This “escape from isolation” contributes to one’s own quality of life or well-being (Sen explicitly acknowledging the relational dimension of well-being), but also this “escape from isolation” can contribute to being reasonable, that is, “understanding and responding to the other deprivations from which human beings suffer” (Sen 2009, p. 415).

One must ask if this can actually give an account of how reasons are reliably turned into effectual reasons, which is to say translated into actions and not mere intentions. In fact, one more distinction (at least) is needed. Most persons do feel senses of obligation and duty, but do not regularly enact them. They ignore them, suppress the reasons, forget about them, or give up after the least bit of difficulty—“Well, I tried”. A third category is

³⁰ In Sen’s latest major work, he increases the role of sympathy putting it alongside and almost *equal* to reason (Sen 2009, p. 415). Sympathy is an interesting dimension because it is, even on Sen’s own account, a feature of shared human nature. It is in the realm of “who we are, not merely who we choose to be”. Sympathy is a “passion”, it is something that happens to, or seizes persons and is not something chosen, and these sympathetic passions are increasingly incorporated into Sen’s work as a foundation for moral responsibility. Reason however is called in to add moral obligation beyond the reach of this sympathetic “passion” where interests are subjectively *experienced* as connected. However, it is very clear from Sen’s language that these *reasons* for social obligation are similar to the sympathetic passions in that they seem to have a force or pressure that cannot be accounted for only in terms of individual choice or reasoning. They “act like” they are external, pressing upon one to follow them—and that one *should* respond to them. There are “basic general obligations”, “universal ethical demands”, “the necessity to ask that question” whether one can help another, and so on (Sen 2009, p. 372-74). Sen clearly, even if implicitly, relies upon a wider framework than individual choice and reason.

needed to translate the sense of moral responsibility reliably into action, and not just one-off action, but stable action, habitual action, the kind of structured and reflective actions that can be truly helpful for human development. This third category is of course a community of shared meanings and loyalties that cultivates standards of practice and role models, exemplars. This is to return to the “communitarian” point which will not be belaboured here except that it must be recognized that communities of meaning are where reasons and commitments are shared, are held “reverently” or with intensity. While Sen needs to better recognize this “communitarian” point, the commitments of the Christian community should follow more closely the Samaritan story. Paradoxically, this provides a basis not just for communitarian reasons, but public, human development reasons.

Before moving on to the category of Well-being, Being must be connected briefly with the Trinity. This connection can highlight the deep connection in EO between creation and the Trinity, which theology is struggling today to ascertain (Gunton 1993; 1993; Gunton 1998). In the West, natural theology was either denied, or was the realm of the One God of discursive reason, not the Tri-Unity corresponding to the human *experience* of unity and diversity (Rahner 1998). However, for Eastern Orthodoxy “The mystery of the singular and plural in man reflects the mystery of the singular and plural in God” (Lossky 1978, p. 67). In other words, Being bears evidence of the categories of person, communion, and shared nature.

5.3.2 Well-being (Good Existence)

If there is a single concept for linking Orthodoxy and the social sciences and DS, the second aspect of Maximus’s Triad, “Well-being” is a promising candidate. Well-being is redolent with meanings in the entire gamut of social sciences and is often described as the aim of development and the antithesis of poverty (Hulme and Toye 2007). Everyone

putatively aims at well-being, living fully, or an authentic human existence. This sense was captured long ago in the famous phrase of the Christian humanist, Irenaeus of Lyons: “the glory of God is man fully alive”.³¹ But are religion and social science talking about the same realities? Are they fundamentally alive to the same aspects in that state characterized as “well-being”?

There is no general answer to the question of the (in)commensurability of theology and the social sciences’ understanding of well-being. This is because there are versions on both sides that illustrate hostility or conciliation. In theology, there are approaches that emphasize discontinuity and a type of strong communitarian reasoning (and thus a rejection of natural theology), where it is difficult to conceive of any type of overlapping consensus. John Milbank, mentioned earlier, is a prominent Protestant theologian who views sociology as a secular heresy. Experience and data are, in this view, so theory laden that persons outside the ecclesial context may not even be experiencing the same things. Richard H. Roberts dubs this approach, despite its sophistication, a form of “post-modern fundamentalism” (Roberts 2005, p. 373).³² However, in Orthodoxy, there is a strong theological basis for shared understandings because of, among other things, Orthodoxy’s more optimistic view of human nature in general, the rational nature of the cosmos, and humanity’s ability to perceive an order both internal to, and independent of the self. This does not mean that theology cannot have its contribution, it’s “plus” of interpreting experience, but rather it is a way of interpreting *shared* experience. There is no “brute”

³¹ The fuller context of this famous passage reads: “The glory of God is man fully alive, and the life of man is the vision of God. If the revelation of God through creation already brings life to all living beings on the earth, how much more will the manifestation of the Father by the Word bring life to those who see God” (Irenaeus 2001 [c. 180]; Osborn 2003). Notice the clear continuity between the apprehension of God in creation and the Incarnation.

³² Milbank is a leader of the movement known as “radical orthodoxy”, not to be confused with Eastern Orthodoxy. Milbank’s stance is “politically alarming” in its unfairness to, and caricatures of, liberalism (Insole 2004). In terms of the present argument, radical orthodoxy is much more communitarian in its epistemology than Eastern Orthodoxy. For literature on the dialogue between radical orthodoxy and Eastern, see (Pabst and Schneider 2009).

experience that is uninterpreted, that is not already theory laden as Kuhn and others have taught—this is true (Kuhn 1970). But theory does not create external reality whole cloth (Barrow 1988, p. 336). Experience is both-and: interpreted and given; theories need not be seen as *a priori* incommensurable.

“Being together”, sociological existence, in EO (and not exclusively in EO) is a spiritual phenomenon precisely because it is relational. This is an aspect of the secular spirituality of social science that the classical sociologists Durkheim and Simmel articulated (Lim and Putnam 2010, p. 916) such that the community itself is the ground of religion. Staniloae would, in a sense, concur but would argue that the empirical community itself is but one ground of value, and a legitimate one, but there are normative considerations in terms of their ethical qualities. Staniloae writes of the Kingdom of God as the “Kingdom of the Between”, that frontier where the “I” meets not an object, but another Subject in the “I-thou” relationship made famous by Martin Buber (Buber 1958). This meeting (but importantly the purification of communion away from selfishness) constitutes true spirituality and is a primary role of the Holy Spirit (Staniloae 1980, p. 63). Orthodoxy is called a “spiritual sociology” (Spidlik 1986) and this is because of the spiritual value given to social existence *per se*, based on the Trinity.

What merits further attention here is that “spiritual growth” is a very comprehensive term with Staniloae. It is not merely about one’s relationship with God for “Human beings cannot achieve full spiritual growth only in relation to God” (Staniloae 2000, p. 38). But neither is spiritual growth entirely about relationships with others as well, but involves support for biological existence, understanding nature’s “reasons”, or in other words,

science, both natural and social, as well as the proper exercise of human agency and the unfolding of truly natural development processes, the “intendencies”³³ within creation.

An example that Staniloae frequently employs to highlight these interacting levels between Being and Well-being is language. Language reveals a certain law-like tendency or universal potential within human experience and is one of nature’s meanings, or *logoi* or structures.³⁴ But language involves human agency or struggle—“why every human learns to speak only through effort” and language is not merely given within experience, it is earned. But language can only be acquired communally, and is itself an expression of and the means for further communion. (It is an irreducibly social good, to use Taylor’s description (Taylor 1995)). All these are aspects of what Staniloae calls “spiritual growth” or Well-being.³⁵ Furthermore, the “Trinitarian” structure of language is seen in its status as a given rational capacity or *structure* within existence, as requiring personal *agency* and struggle for its acquisition, and as inextricably *communal*. There are individual reasons of things (*logoi*), but larger covering reasons, or “more complete reasons” for things. The more complete reason for language is communion and as an expression of solidarity, but this does not negate the spiritual nature of the preliminary aspects of language structure and acquisition. As Staniloae writes, “communication reveals itself not only as a permanent rationality [Being or *logoi*], but also certain meanings of an ever more exalted kind [agency and communion]” (Staniloae 2000, p. 39). These more exalted meanings represent an “erotic” aspiration (i.e. from within nature), towards the fullness of

³³ This is a neologism combining “intended” and “tendencies”. It is not to be confused with words like superintendent or managerial functions.

³⁴ *Logoi* are not just laws, patterns, but also powers that can be described as broadly shared functions. As such however, their *complete* specification will be necessarily personal, spiritual, done in freedom and thus bear features of the particular as well as universal.

³⁵ Strictly speaking, the undeveloped but nonetheless existent capacity for language would be in the previous category of Being. In the other schema, the Image→Likeness framework, it would fall under the image, or the capacity.

Trinitarian communion as the Archetype—that is, ever more complete communion with God and others.

Staniloae argues that the “rationality of things” has two purposes. The first is to be helpful to humans in their biological existence. The second,

and equally is to foster human spiritual growth through the knowledge of meanings, the knowledge of the ever deeper conformity of these meanings within himself, and finally, the knowledge of their ultimate meaning, which is God, who most fully satisfies the thirst for ultimate fulfilment (Staniloae 2000, p. 38).

Notice the “and equally”. First the biological is placed equally important with the spiritual, then there is a spiritual process which is an understanding of nature’s laws (or meanings) external to humans; next is the same laws’ culmination in humans, and finally seeing the ultimate reasons for these reasons in God who Staniloae calls the Supreme Reason. Notice also the “and finally”—which denotes a developmental sequence which has communion with God as its outcome. This process of beholding the reasons within existence is itself a form of communion with God. Staniloae writes that St. Maximus is a stranger to the idea of a spiritual vision which one might attain by bypassing the forms and laws of the cosmos. “On the road of our approach to God stands the world—we must pass through the understanding of it”, and Staniloae quotes Maximus directly: the one who “investigates with the mind in a wise way the *logoi* in each created thing, discovers God...” (Staniloae 2003, p. 204-5). One cannot jump straight to God and bypass creation.

Given these general comments, it is necessary now to define more precisely how Well-being³⁶ is used in its *strict* usage by Maximus the Confessor and Staniloae (versus its general usage in the social sciences). This Well-being aspect is, to use the Aristotelian

³⁶ Henceforth, when referring specifically to the second category of Maximus’s Triad (Being, Well-being, and Eternal-being), the capitalized Well-being will be used.

terminology that Staniloae employs, “bringing the powers of his nature into act” (Staniloae 2000, p. 36). Well-being in this technical sense concerns the activation of nature’s powers through the agency of the will. Staniloae’s (and Maximus’s, therefore all of Orthodoxy’s) understanding of human nature is that of an agent, one who is not merely structurally or communally determined, but as one who can will and act. Staniloae was conversant with debates about the human person and consciously sought an agent oriented understanding of the person, versus the Cartesian “thinker” (Rogobete 2002, p. 206). But agents are not in isolation, and the activation of human powers is not an insular project. For indeed God gives each a power of their own, but “in the same way their powers are linked to one another among themselves and to the divine power” (Staniloae 1994, p. 193), the divine power being the energy or source behind all powers—and a power that meets human powers to orientate and fulfil them precisely in their natural capacity. The main point here is that this *technical* notion of Well-being in Orthodoxy implies not only agency, but an openness or responsiveness within nature (within the structures or laws of Being) to human agency. That is, nature is neither entirely structured in a rigid fashion such that it is impermeable to agency, nor is nature entirely unstructured (random) and without certain normative tendencies that are unresponsive to human action. Following the Great commands, or the *logoi* (another use of the polyvalent term *logoi*—meaning also principles of their *future* development)³⁷ *structures human actions* in a way that begins the process of unlocking these God-given potentials latent within creation—and ultimately it is love which does so.

Mentioned earlier in the discussion on Trinitarian natural theology was the distinction between *hypostasis* and *ousia*, the former referring to that which is unique and constitutes

³⁷ “The *logoi* of things presently is also the principles of their future development and in the kingdom of God” (Thunberg 1985, p. 136), which is to say the commands orientate humans to the proper use and development of their diverse functions. This pertains to the eschatological, or the “forward” orientation of EO (Clendenin 1994).

the “individual” person and is the “power of their own”, and *ousia* as the shared aspects, the essence of human nature. This has pointed to a unity of human nature (*ousia*), but multiple unique instantiations of this nature (*hypostases*) as persons—and all Orthodox agree that persons have some kind of “priority” over nature inasmuch as the person cannot be reduced to nature. However, another similar set of terms, *logos* and *tropos*, can perhaps better clarify the role of agency and its relation to nature *within* a person and not between persons sharing a common nature. *Logos* is that aspect of human nature that is law-like, universal, and is in principle subject to the natural and social sciences. It is the “fixity of created natures or species” (Thunberg 1985). *Logos* represents the “*what-ness*” of human existence. *Tropos*, on the other hand, is how this “nature” is particularized, activated, through the agency of the unique human will in relation to a unique environment. *Tropos* is the “*who-ness*” of diverse, concrete, and particular instances of human natures. Thus, personhood is both the investigation of the shared “what-ness” that exists already (*logos*), but it is also the moulding of that which is dependent on one’s unique activity and the personalization of nature (*tropos*) through the gift of freedom interacting with the openness of *logos*.³⁸ The “great message” of the ancient mystics was this: “human nature is changeable” (Tatakis 2007, p. 135). Nature *never* exists merely in an abstract or universal form, but only in, and through, and *for* its personalization.

It is important to note that there are two dimensions to the exercise of agency in this category of Well-being. While Orthodoxy is rather optimistic about human nature and fulfilling these potentials, there remains the fact that Well-being exists in challenged conditions, which is the “Fall”. The exercise of agency in Well-being therefore has two dimensions, and a set of separate tasks. The first is to note that even without the Fall,

³⁸ As mentioned in chapter two but using different terminology, these two dimensions, the *logos* or “what-ness” and the *tropos* or “who-ness” of persons, corresponds to the two basic forms of social science, the positivistic and the hermeneutical.

humans would still have the mission of bringing certain potentials to fruition through action. The task of *theosis* or human development is thus not merely a response to the “Fall”. The Divine intention was always for humans to bring into actuality certain potentials through their own effort. But because human selfishness has misplaced the proper role of agency, and acts *unnaturally*, this process has become challenged and there are further, reparative and ascetical tasks involved in *theosis*. The shared human nature that should be a source of unity and solidarity has been “shredded by sin” (Maximus). Social divisions, inequalities, and structured risks separate humans and destroy the unity in love that was God’s original intention for creation. Social and natural distinctions that could be sources of beneficial diversity become the grounds for violent divisions (Zizioulas 2006).

Maximus delineated five features that restore the effects of the Fall,³⁹ most of which are cosmic in scope and outside the realm of human agency. However, it is significant that the principal human responsibility or task in *theosis* is repairing the discord that occurred between male and female in the Fall. As the early chapters of Genesis reveal, sin created (or was itself?) a discord or an “enmity” between the sexes and the first task of *theosis* is repairing this. This theological analysis is significant because it parallels a principal arena of development studies which is the analysis of gender related injustices (Sen 1999, *passim*; Sumner 2006, p. 645). The task now is to look at Maximus’s and Staniloae’s approach to gender reconciliation and correlate this with DS.

Maximus the Confessor did not have a very high view of marriage or sexuality, or even sexual differentiation, which he viewed as due to the Fall, but for reasons which should not

³⁹ The first three of these illustrate the cosmic dimensions of salvation. The Incarnation achieved decisively the first. The five, in a very truncated version are: 1) between the created and the Uncreated; 2) within the world between the intelligible and the sensible realms; 3) between heaven and earth; 4) on earth, between paradise and the world of men; and 5) in humanity between man and woman, or the masculine and the feminine (Thunberg 1985, p. 80).

be missed. For Maximus, the male “division” of the human unity represents the passion/function *thumos* (anger, ambition, activity), and the female represents the passion/function *epithumia* (concupiscence, sensuality, and passivity). Both of these “passions” must be subordinated to the common nature, the *logos*, of both sexes in a relation of reciprocity and equality on the moral basis of shared nature. Marriage and the passions involved in procreation are not rejected as these are instituted by God. Marriage and sexuality are the divinely ordained means for achieving this unity and the continuation of the species; but there is “a more noble form of relationship between man and woman, a relationship *in* their common *logos* of human nature” (Thunberg 1985, p. 83) that somehow transcends gender.⁴⁰

There are, however, potentially problematic features with this division between the genders to be “overcome”, which did not seem to be lost on Staniloae. Staniloae references this very schematic of Maximus, but he alters Maximus’s approach in that he omits any specific mention of the division rooted in sexual differentiation. He writes: “The believer, freed from passions, overcomes his separation from his neighbours, then the separation that divides him from the sensible world” (Staniloae 1994, p. 180). There is no mention of gender whatsoever and the discourse changes to “neighbour”. One possible reason for the change is this: it seems that for Maximus the common *logos* of human nature (and the *imago dei*) is something which is *neither* male nor female *per se*, while for Staniloae, it seems that the one *logos* of human nature is by its very nature *both* male and female. This is more in accord with the principle of a unity that is not one of sameness, but is a unity or wholeness that is combined of genuinely diverse parts, or as Staniloae quoted from Lossky when discussing this very issue, the “wholesome diversity of love” (Staniloae 2000, p. 96). Gendered-ness may not be something to be transcended and need not be viewed as a result

⁴⁰ Spidlik writes: “Perhaps only John Chrysostom understood that the essence of marriage is love and that its primary aim is to unify mankind” (Spidlik 1986, p. 220). Most of the Church Fathers, East or West, did not have a very positive view of sexuality.

of the Fall: “male and female he created them” exist as a fundamental unity in diversity in the *imago dei*. But it is important to note the strong “cosmopolitan” strain in Maximus, which gives an “ontological” status, to “In Christ there is neither male nor female”.⁴¹ It is perhaps an overly radical equalization of the gender divide, but the moral aim is a universal charity, a reciprocity and equality between the sexes, and this as the first task of *theosis*.

However, reflection on global development challenges, which development studies elucidates, can provide reasons for not ignoring gender divisions and folding them within the category of “neighbour” as Staniloae did. Perhaps a form of Maximus’s position should remain as the first task of unifying the cosmos through human agency. This is because the “shredding of human nature through sin”, the defacing of the *imago dei* and the stunting and thwarting of human flourishing, is highly correlated with gender deprivations.

Amartya Sen highlighted the phenomenon of “missing women” in a series of papers in the late 1980’s and early 90’s (Sen 1989; 1990; 1992) demonstrating that up to 100 million women were “missing”, which referred to the number of female fetuses aborted or born girls left to die. This is based on a comparison with sub-Saharan Africa where the natural female/male ratio at birth is about 102 to 100. However, in India it is 93 females for every 100 males, in Bangladesh, China and West Asia it is 94 and only 90 in Pakistan. These numbers represent around 100 million females who have ‘disappeared’ *just because they are girls*—ranking it with the worst human catastrophes of the twentieth century. This number has “increased in absolute terms, but fallen as a share of women alive” (Klasen and Wink 2005). These numbers are staggering and they reflect only the most extreme forms

⁴¹ Staniloae’s approach on this is not altogether dissimilar but he affirms a type of marital relationship that can be more profound than one based on sexual passions: “we may even say that such love can grow more profound and is more lasting where no preoccupation with this pleasure exists”. However, as Staniloae goes on, “Human beings need to multiply ... in order to foster that unending richness ... of persons (unique in their originality) occasions for the benefit of every human being and for that of humanity in general” (Staniloae 2000, p. 96).

of deprivations; other ones deserve scrutiny as well such as lack of rights to work outside the home (Koggel 2005),⁴² the double work day, undervalued domestic labour, rape as a war crime, and others.

Any credible theology of human development must focus more attention on women's rights to, and challenges for, capability development. For example, female agency faces challenges that males do not experience and requires greater practical reason and emotional intelligence (Onyango and Jentoft 2011). Important and more controversial is how social relationships are structured in terms of the concrete practice of institutions. The gendered hierarchy of religion may play a role in "women-unfriendly religious practices" (Robeyns 2005, p. 85). In Orthodoxy, the two most prominent "icons" of the Trinity, as has been mentioned, are both the Church and the family. However, some argue that the exclusion of females in the exercise of social power in the Church is perhaps the "effectual truth" and can influence negatively the exercise of social roles both within the family and society at large. There is debate on this within Orthodoxy: the "social inclusion of women is, in a new historical form, to be converted to the Gospel", and the "soaring theologies versus the empirical realities are an insult to women" (Behr-Sigel 1991). But such voices are just beginning to be uttered, much less heard. But it is important to note that this problem is not unique to EO, or even religious institutions (Robeyns 2005, p. 85).

There are further reasons for focusing on specifically female social improvements. Advancing female capabilities often has a much greater overall effect, relative to males. Noting that child mortality is a fundamental indicator for *overall* human development, it is noteworthy that "the effect of [an increase in] female literacy on [a decrease in] child mortality is extraordinarily large" (decrease from 156 per 1000 to 110) while other

⁴² Under Communism, however, women were forced to work outside the home (Andjelkovic 1998; Fodor 1998; Rueschemeyer 1998).

variables, including male literacy and overall economic development, are negligible in comparison (Sen 1999, pp. 197-8). Compared with male literacy, a similar increase (from 22 to 75 percent) results in a child mortality reduction of only 169 per 1000 to 141. But perhaps even more noteworthy, a 50 percent reduction in the incidence of overall poverty only reduced the predicted value of child mortality from 156 per 1000 to 153! Thus increased female literacy serves as a major multiplier for other critical social outcomes for all.

However, there are other areas beyond gender deprivations where the CA can make contributions in this EO category of Well-being, concerned as it is with agency and its role in unlocking the capacities given in Being. One final example here concerns the need for human shelter as a basic right to protect valuable functionings, and the way Communism went about providing this versus the way the CA might approach it. Shelter is connected with many central human capabilities, the most general being bodily health, but this in relation also to basic comfort and other aspects such as opportunities for raising a family. It is laudable that Communism aspired to provide widespread public housing to meet this basic need, and in large measure they succeeded. Homelessness was unheard of under Communism, and its presence in capitalist societies was received as incontrovertible evidence of Communism's triumph. However, if other development values are allowed to enter, the way they achieved this objective was not laudable. It is not laudable that in order to provide this basic function, whole villages were bulldozed and persons forced to move on short notice into dehumanizing and hastily erected block apartments. It is not laudable that people were moved hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles away from their native geographical region with no consent. It is not laudable that the provision of public housing was all part of a larger system of control in a command economy where people

were herded about like cattle.⁴³ Thus, in the provision of this basic need, praiseworthy as it is, fundamental rights and development values were trampled. What difference would the CA make here? The CA first of all would agree with Communism in terms of provision for this basic capability. The CA would not side with an exclusively political form of rights. But it would, however, work hard to obtain a solution in concrete practice that would meet this basic need for shelter but not needlessly undermine agency. For example, various options could be given that give more respect for choice. And even if a perfect solution was not at hand, it would include those whose lives were being affected in selecting the best result from a set of viable options.

In one of the few official documents by EO on the theme of “development”, this role of agency is affirmed:

Because human beings are created in God’s image and are stewards of His creation, they are co-workers with God, which means that human beings are agents of their own development and of the development of others (Tsetsis 1983, p. 91).

Theosis is a movement towards fullness of life that incorporates the social, biological, agency, and in principle every dimension of human existence. Staniloae puts this point remarkably clear:

We might say that God who created both man and nature proposes certain ends to man through nature, certain rational goals of a higher kind, so that from among the many possible ends open to his choice he may choose to fulfil and to develop these higher ones (Staniloae 1980, p. 225).

This approach to salvation that includes human agency can perform important work on many fronts, not least of which is a better integration of Christian faith and development

⁴³ One of Staniloae’s only openly negative references to Communism in his *Dogmatics* refers to this situation of forced housing: a “physical proximity that has been imposed” that paradoxically creates “enormous gulfs between men”. A “hardening of spiritual distance is taking place that no longer provides one person with the motivation or the possibility of moving towards another”. So strong is Staniloae’s language that he immediately says, “In such a case God himself, together with his uncreated energies, has withdrawn as a linking bridge and as longing and attraction between men” (Staniloae 1994, p. 178).

concerns.⁴⁴ If EO can give a coherent theological and motivational framework for “capability development”, the CA on the other hand provides analyses of what factors hinder and can promote this, principal among these being gender related deprivations. And it is significant that the principal task in Well-being, for repairing human unity, is related to this. And, to lead into the next section on Eternal-being—it is not implausible that a belief in eternal life can unleash tremendous motivational capacities to address these issues (Kung 1985). Temporal human development objectives and the immense challenges and sacrifices involved can be charged with splendour, rendered radiant, within a perspective of their eternal significance.

5.3.3 Eternal-being (Eternal Existence)

The third and final aspect of the movement constitutive of *theosis* is Eternal-being. It is not necessary to deal with this dimension at length in this present study because Eternal-being begins “only after the resurrection” (Staniloae 2003, p. 369). However:

Every single aspect of eternal happiness is promised by the Lord as the result of certain ways of living and acting in this life, as the fruit of certain seeds sown and nurtured in the fields of this world (Staniloae 1980, p. 207).

Thus Eternal-being and Well-being are interconnected, as Being and Well-being were. But it is important to show the relationship between Well-being and Eternal-being by noting the distinction which Staniloae makes between deification in the *broad* sense, and deification in the *strict* sense:

We can say that deification [in the broad sense] ... coincides with the process of the development of human powers to their limit, or with the full realization of human nature, but also with their unending eclipse by grace (Staniloae 2003, p. 363).

⁴⁴ Chapter seven will show that some forms of theology, out of fear of denigrating grace, are unclear about or even deny the role of human agency.

This “unending eclipse by grace” is deification in the *strict* sense (Staniloae’s term) and is this category of Eternal-being. It is immortality, the conquest of Death by Life, foreshadowed in the Incarnation, Transfiguration, and Resurrection of Christ. This strict sense of deification happens after the natural has reached its limit, and “belongs only to the ages to come” and is only anticipated here “for brief moments”. In this context, Staniloae writes of deification as “an exit from the laws of nature in general” (Staniloae 2003, p. 366), thus implying the sphere of Well-being is implicated in natural laws and thus can in some way be the subject matter of the human sciences, as will be investigated in chapter eight. This is further evidence that *theosis* involves the elevation of natural processes, processes involving *inter alia* human agency, structures (*logoi*), and communion.

Eternal-being, or deification in the “strict” sense, is entirely a gift of grace. But eternity is for Staniloae not the negation or the opposition to this life, but its “natural” *telos*, or completion. Eternity serves as a lure towards wholeness within this life, towards normative, unceasing, development. In this sense, Eternal-being can be seen as an extension of the irreducible value of the *person*, or personality viewed as the highest value in the universe. The human is a *someone* and not merely a *something*. This understanding “sustains within him both the will to exist and the will to be perfecting himself eternally, while his irreplaceable uniqueness shows itself worthy of enduring eternally” (Staniloae 2000, p. 65).⁴⁵ Staniloae quotes Gregory of Nazianzus: “In my quality as one belonging to the earth, I am attached to life here, but being also a divine particle, I bear within me a

⁴⁵ Note this remarkable quote by Staniloae that includes the logic of Eternity in relation to temporal existence, and shaping nature in a higher direction:

To a judgement that sees only the rigid order of nature, the wisdom manifested in nature will seem superior to the wisdom revealed in that revelation which culminates in Christ; it may even seem to it to be the only true wisdom. But, according to our conception, a wisdom that reveals the order of the world as a basis for the development of the human being towards an eternal existence is, in reality, more profound. For this is the one that responds to the worth and longing of the human being; more profound yet is a wisdom that reveals the order of the world as a basis for a higher and eternal dialogue of the human being with God and his neighbors; still more profound therefore is a wisdom that reestablishes the human being with the higher and complex order of normal interpersonal relations sustained by the dialogue with God, a dialogue of endless exactingness, subtlety and complexity, a dialogue that can shape even the order of nature in a higher direction (Staniloae 1994, p. 213).

yearning for the life to come” (Staniloae 2000, p. 81). As expected, this dignity as a value is “located”, as it were, in multiple aspects: freedom, communion, corporality, but also rationality. Staniloae quotes Maximus asserting that “man will come to the consciousness of his glory as a rational being” (Staniloae 2003, p. 85).

It is fundamentally important in Orthodoxy that God be “personal”. If God were not personal the human “return” or union with the Absolute would be a return to, and a union with an impersonal *something* and not a *Someone*—to a level of existence inferior to the human. This would imply an absorption of the human person into an unconscious absolute, a “less-than” human, an eradication of freedom, and would violate the ontological order of the superior dignity of persons over the inanimate and lower orders of creation. Indeed, secular human development in many respects presupposes this moral order, of persons over things, as human or capability development over merely materialistic development and provision of basic needs. In the context of this category of Eternal-being a question must be asked: does the value of the person merely end in absurdity, in nothingness and meaninglessness after death? If one answers Yes, then this can slide easily into nihilism. As Maurice Blondel launches his magnificent *Action* (1893), a work influential on Staniloae: “Yes or no, does human life make sense and does man have a destiny?” (Blondel 1984, p. 3). Secular development presupposes this Yes, but suppresses serious reflection on it. This leads to an *aporia*: development can be seen as both requiring but “coming to a halt in face of questions which ... it cannot help but ask, yet cannot hope to answer” (Macmurray 1969, p. 218). Perhaps this is as it should be, but this means that development is “*liminal*”, it points, or “aspires” beyond itself for a more ultimate type of fulfilment. Human development raises questions that only theology can answer.

In Orthodoxy's theological anthropology, humans were "made" for eternal life; they were created to participate in the Uncreated. Eternal being is thus integrally connected with the previous categories of Being and Well-being, stages where human's valuable lives are lived subject to nature's laws. But one of these laws is that humans are *theotropic*, meaning they have a built in *tendency* towards and yearning for God and a state of wholeness, and the "actualization of life as communion" (Russell 2004, p. 319). Thus the tendency toward eternal life is not just a response to sin, but rather is conceived in Orthodoxy as an intrinsic part of human nature. Staniloae argues that "The potency for immortality was given ... in the garden ... but lost" (Staniloae 2000, p. 105) because of misused freedom such that the reign of corruption and death entered. But nostalgia for this wholeness remains, this primordial *shalom* that serves as a lure. Staniloae quotes Vladimir Lossky:

But human love would not be pregnant with such paradisiacal nostalgia if there did not remain painfully within it the memory of a first condition where the other and the world were known from the inside, where, accordingly, death did not exist (in Staniloae 2000, p. 96).

Homo sapiens are simultaneously *homo capax divini*—humanity capable of the divine. Humans are both "fitted", and "thirsty", for the divine (Staniloae 2003, p. 78). It is important to note that it is the Incarnation that reveals and rehabilitates this capacity, this "potency for immortality" that was lost.

However, despite deification in this "strict" sense being entirely a gift of grace, Staniloae creatively connects Eternal-being closely with Well-being by connecting the two major dogmas of Orthodoxy. He writes:

Living as they did in a period when the ideas of person and of interpersonal communion were still not very well developed, the Fathers, in their treatment of the resurrection, placed greater emphasis on the share that human nature had in the incorruptible divine life. The two aspects, nevertheless, form a single whole. Incorruptibility belongs to the perfection of communion, hence to the Trinitarian love (Staniloae 1994, p 73).

Staniloae here integrates Eternal-being with Well-being, thus integrating the Incarnation (representing for the Early Fathers incorruptibility or Eternal-being) with the Trinity, which is to say with social concerns (the perfection of communion). This legitimates raising the question of whether and under what conditions faith in a higher order can shape and motivate social action—one of the most important questions for a theology of development. Clearly, religion is not always positive as a force for social change (Garrett 1989). But neither can religion's role nor focus on eternal issues be dismissed negatively or ignored as it has been in development studies.

In this regard, Amartya Sen misunderstands the crucial role of such “Eternal” ideals and how they provide a motivating framework for social action. Sen, in his recent book *The Idea of Justice*, calls for a “new” approach to thinking about justice that focuses less on idealized visions of perfect justice, and more on the diagnosis and removal of “clearly remediable injustices”. Early in the book, he calls forth examples of persons who “were not trying to achieve a perfectly just world ... but they did want to remove clear injustices to the extent they could” (Sen 2009, p. vii). He then says that *this* desire to remove concrete obstacles is “what *animates* us” to think about justice and injustice. But is this right—is this what *animates* “us?” Clearly it is on one level, the tactical aim is generally not for complete justice but the reduction of injustice. It is also right in the sense that Sen is trying to argue that development studies can find a common ground in the condemnation and removal of clear injustices (that all can putatively agree on) rather than a controversial version of the good that everyone must agree upon before action can begin. This formulation of justice can indeed help differing traditions collaborate on development challenges and not quibble over ultimate foundations.

But it is wrong in terms of, and analytically disjointed from, a generalized theory of “what animates us” to think about striving for justice or development. It is wrong about the

sources of motivation for development precisely because it confounds the practical “what” question of development with the more mysterious “why” question.⁴⁶ Sen confounds the domains of the external with the internal; he confounds the “next tactic” with the fuller animating vision—*theoria*—in its original sense. On this “what” level of development it can be acknowledged that Sen’s *Idea of Justice* is a legitimate advancement—i.e. the removal of concrete injustices is a better way to think about the practical requirements of justice rather than a perfect description of justice. But functioning as a general theory of “what animates us”, it is completely misleading. Sen cites the important example of Martin Luther King Jr. to illustrate his point. Sen argued that King did not strive for a perfect reconstruction of society, but for an improvement of existing conditions and solving specific problems—which is *not* an altogether truthful description. In actual fact, it is well known that MLK was motivated by something analogous to the Trinity as an ideal model of human society. Speaking at the end of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1956, MLK declared that their goal was *not* simply the end of segregation as an institution through the non-violent bus boycott (Sen’s reduction of an injustice). This was indeed the proximate tactical goal. But there was a broader spiritual horizon motivating King: “the end is reconciliation, the end is redemption, the aftermath of nonviolence is the *creation of the beloved community*” (King-Jr. 1963). Charles Marsh in a study on MLK described the effect this vision of the beloved community played and how “the imaginative stress of envisioning the world made whole, enables moral discipline and discernment” (Marsh 2005, p. 213). As Marsh notes, the civil rights movement is all too often recast as a secular movement “that used religion to its advantage”, when, if anything, it was the other way around for Dr. King. It is well known that he viewed his principal identity as that of a

⁴⁶ Sen does recognize that the motivational question is separate, which would seem to give a place for religion. But he later blocks this option by setting in stark opposition traditions of “reasoned argument” from “reliance on faith and unreasoned convictions” (Sen 2009, pp.xiii-xiv). Sen seems to censor any positive mention concerning the role that religious faith plays in development, while he frequently retells an anecdote from his childhood about the Muslim day-labourer “Kader Mia” being stabbed to death in a Hindu area and “the terrible burden of narrowly defined identities” (Sen 1999, p. 8; Sen 2006).

Baptist pastor and it was this tradition and leadership role within it that not only provided motivation in the fight for justice, not only honed the rhetorical skills so critical to his effectiveness, but also give shape and specific content (e.g. non-violence and forgiveness) to these justice concerns as well.⁴⁷ A mere glance at the non-violence pledge attests to the role of religious faith in this world-changing expression of social activism:

Martin Luther King, Jr's "Nonviolence Pledge:"

1. As you prepare to march, meditate on the life and teachings of Jesus.
 2. Remember the nonviolent movement seeks justice and reconciliation -- not victory.
 3. Walk and talk in the manner of love; for God is love.
 4. Pray daily to be used by God that all men and women might be free.
 5. Sacrifice personal wishes that all might be free.
 6. Observe with friends and foes the ordinary rules of courtesy.
 7. Perform regular service for others and the world.
 8. Refrain from violence of fist, tongue, and heart.
 9. Strive to be in good spiritual and bodily health.
 10. Follow the directions of the movement leaders and of the captains on demonstrations
- (King-Jr. 1963, p. 537).

Development studies can improve itself by obtaining a fuller picture of those “internal” factors, dogmas, beliefs, supporting communities (those “narrowly defined identities” as Sen calls them), and practices which promote concerns for, and more importantly, sustained practice on behalf of justice. “Eternity” is usually understood as a vision of ideal states of human flourishing; the Kingdom of God is “a perfect community” (Staniloae 1980, p. 128). This mystical vision of a world made whole is often the real motivational

⁴⁷ Sen asks “what kinds of reasoning could count” in assessment of ethical concepts and it is not clear how a religious understanding such as MLK exhibited, could “survive reasoned confrontation with others not restricted by the same parochialism” (Sen 2009, p. viii). Sen’s criteria would seem to exclude MLK, his own example! However, for an important discussion of how religious based understandings can be used in public, see (Perry 1997).

reason behind great history-changing actions on behalf of human development such as William Wilberforce's lifelong campaign to eradicate slavery (discussed in the next chapter). Staniloae writes that development is:

The transcending of every one-sided image and all such images taken together [and this] proceeds from the intuition of a perfection beyond created things, a perfection in which these images have their source and toward which they tend (Staniloae 2000, p. 49-50).

It is, as John Rawls, Adam Smith and Amartya Sen said in a different voice: trying to look at situations “impartially”, *sub specie aeternitatis*⁴⁸—from the point of view of eternity or wholeness, or fullness of life. Both theology and development presuppose this tension between the ideal and the actual. Development studies can provide a helpful analysis of the problems and injustices that should be addressed, but religious type “reasons” and communities play a crucial role in envisioning a world made whole, and providing a spiritual vision and motivational context for attacking these complex issues to begin with. Sen is right, more reasoning is needed and his latest work signals a helpful move in this direction. It is doubtful, given his commitment to free choice, that he would take the next step toward the necessary *moral formation* of actors motivated and committed to actually becoming problem solvers for human development. And this freedom based refusal may itself not be reasonable.

The “virtues” will now be examined to address this very issue. The argument in the remaining chapters is that the virtue tradition can serve as an important bridge between faith and development. This is because the virtue tradition is already in the social

⁴⁸ John Rawls ends his magisterial *Theory of Justice* with a religious eulogy to his “original position”. Notice the blatantly religious language:

Thus to see our place in society from the perspective of this position is to see it *sub specie aeternitatis*: it is to regard the human situation not only from all social but also from all temporal points of view. The perspective of eternity is not a perspective from a certain place beyond the world, nor the point of view of a transcendent being; rather it is a certain form of thought and feeling that rational persons can adopt in the world ... [and note the very last sentence of the book] Purity of heart, if one could attain it, would be to see clearly and to act with grace and self-command from this point of view (Rawls 1999, p. 514).

sciences/DS but is also firmly ensconced in many, though not all, broad forms of Christian faith. And for EO, this approach would be especially attractive as *theosis* receives its most complete expression in terms of the virtues.

6. THE VIRTUES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

This chapter begins the first stage of a multi-chapter argument which explores the virtue tradition as a key strategy for integrating faith and development. The logic of this chapter relative to the next is that in this chapter the virtues outside of the Christian faith will be discussed, while the next chapters investigate virtues within theology. This chapter argues that human development can “change for the better” by embracing the virtue approach. In Sen’s development vision for example, postulating individual freedom as both the means and ends of development and giving a “space” for the *possibility* of altruistic behaviour does, in fact, little to move persons toward human development actions. The virtue approach can address important gaps in development theory—namely how persons can actually become reliable agents of change. Furthermore, several different versions of the virtues will be offered to counterbalance weaknesses in particular perspectives.

The virtues have, however, a controversial background that presents perils for HD if not handled carefully. Both secular and Christian accounts of the virtues are shaped by this primarily Aristotelian background, sometimes in harmful ways that merit scrutiny. But before this can be addressed, a difficulty must be resolved that hovers over this entire discussion: does a distinct virtue tradition even exist?

6.1 Is there a distinctive virtue tradition?

Martha Nussbaum has raised serious doubts whether a single virtue approach with a definable core exists, calling it a “misleading category” (Nussbaum 1999). Virtue ethics is often set as an alternative to utilitarianism and Kantianism, but, as Nussbaum points out, both of these employed a virtue approach, Henry Sidgwick and JS Mill for utilitarianism,

and the importance of Kant's virtue ethics for his entire system is now widely recognized.¹ Virtue theorists have been defined more by who they, often mistakenly, thought they were against than by any discernible core.

Even so, Nussbaum herself shows that certain family features can be observed and these justify continued reference to a discernible, even if not entirely distinct, virtue tradition. In terms of these family features, first of all, there is a return "to the Greeks" for inspiration in thinking about ethical matters. Kant himself noted that "the ancient moral philosophers ... pretty well exhausted all that can be said upon virtue" (in Sherman 1997, p. 3), even though Kant fundamentally altered their approach. Second, and this is a principal critique of utilitarianism, the virtue approach recognizes a plurality of human goods. "Each virtue is an organized way of cherishing a particular end that has intrinsic value. Taken together, the virtues ... represent a commitment to cherish all the valuable things..." (Nussbaum 1999, p. 183). Third, and in line with this, emotion and desire are valuable ends; they are "not simply mindless pushes" but shape and are shaped by reasoning. Ethical theory influenced by Kant mistakenly sought "to establish a metaphysic of morals where reason alone is the source of moral authority" (Sherman 1997, p. 2). Fourth, there is a focus on ethical decision making from within history and specific contexts and all the particularities of the human case. This point is especially important. Ethical reasoning involves not just isolated acts of choice, but patterns of action and intentions and reason shaped by historical forces (Deneulin 2006). Anglo-American philosophy from the 1950's -70's ignored these time-implicated features of "character" and viewed ethical decision making as "in the moment". Fifth and last, virtue thinkers are often interested in literature or narrative which can display "long-term patterns of character, action, and commitment, while investigating the relevant passions..." in a "way that "isolated philosophical examples

¹ This was led by *inter alia* Onora O'Neill (O'Neill 1989) and (Sherman 1997) who demonstrated the similarity of Kant's virtue approach to that of Aristotle and the Stoics.

cannot” (Nussbaum 1999, p. 175). These five considerations show that there are indeed sufficient family features to justify continued reference to the virtues as an ethical tradition.

To continue with these family features, a very brief overview of the virtues as a formal concept will be offered before turning to specific accounts. Virtue, from the Greek *arête*, denotes the *excellence* of a thing and comprehends notions of strength, capacity, flourishing, correct attitudinal states, proper functioning, moral goodness, and most importantly, practical activity performed *well*. The point of the virtues is not simply to know about goodness, or excellence, or justice, but to *become* good or excellent persons through habitual right action, and action right for specific contexts. Thus one definition of virtue is “the capacity to do what is right, and what is right in a given case” (Woodruff 2001, p. 6). Of course this is not the same in every situation or cultural epoch—but it seems that every culture has notions of human excellence.

One important technical distinction found in Aristotle will be advanced here: the difference between virtue and practical reason. The term “virtue” denotes a specific excellence within a *specific* sphere of action or feeling such as bravery (the right exercise of the emotion of fear) or the virtuous use of money. Practical reason (*phronesis*), which is sometimes called prudence, is, however, *overall* human excellence. It is human excellence in terms of an agent who reasons well about what it is to be a human, and deliberating on the moral ends of life as a whole, and life characterized as “activity”. This is why Aristotle says that *phronesis* contains all the other virtues, and why “virtue” is sometimes used synonymously with the exercise of practical reason. Much more than this cannot be said about virtues in general for the virtues depend on the specific context and values of the system or community in which they are found—although the extent to which this is the case is debated as well.

6.2 Homeric, Platonic and Stoic virtues

There is an important but troubled historical background for the virtues that must be examined. Human development emerges partly out of the modern identity, but the modern identity is in large part developed out of a Greek background. That the ancients play an important, even if romanticized role can be seen in JS Mill's famous words: "Mankind can hardly be too often reminded, that there was once a man named Socrates" (Mill 1991, p. 27). This background is important also for Christianity, and especially EO, whose identity is directly related to a synthesis of Greek and Biblical forms of wisdom.² "Aretology", or the study of the virtues and their classical background, is therefore critical (Tatakis 2007, p. 115).

As mentioned above, "virtue" is Greek for *arête*, which is etymologically linked with words like aristocrat, and harks back ultimately to the Greek word for male, *aner*. Built into the very foundation of virtue is thus the notion of *male* strength or characteristically masculine excellence. This was associated, of course, with the ancient Greek warrior ethic. A specifically male set of traits or excellences were celebrated; *kudos*, or glory was attributed primarily to courage, bravery, and prowess in battle, in defence of, or in conquest for, the *polis*. The celebration of these traits is seen in the opening of the great Homeric poem the *Iliad*: "Sing goddess, the wrath of Achilles" (Homer 1995) and Thucydides noted that the Greeks used to walk around with swords. Aristotle echoes this about the "former" customs of the Greeks:

The customs of former times might be said to be too simple and barbaric. For Greeks used to go around armed with swords; and they used to buy wives from one another; and there are surely other ancient customs that are extremely stupid (in Nussbaum 2001, p. 242).

² Byzantine or Eastern theology "was nothing but a continuous effort and struggle to express the tradition of the Church in the living categories of Greek thought" (Meyendorff 1979, p. 2), which is to say, philosophy.

Aristotle finishes this passage pointing out however that the Greeks changed. The reason for the change was that humans seek not the “way of their ancestors, but the good”. Here is recognition of the search for an “objective” moral order and that traditions are often out of line with this and can self-correct.

There is evidence of tensions within the ancient conceptions of human excellence already in the Homeric poems. Achilles, as the icon of bravery and physical strength, was contrasted with Odysseus, gifted with verbal cunning and persuasion. This tension foreshadowed the transition to the softer virtues, those of wisdom, justice, and so forth expressed by Plato—and Aristotle following.³ Plato was offering Socrates as the new model of human excellence, the new human hero, centred on dialogue and reason—intentionally set against the Homeric exemplars. In defence of his peculiar way of life, Socrates often appealed to “the god” to explain his more “cosmopolitan” perspective and criticism of the injustices and criminality of the *polis*.

But far from being a modern liberal “champion of choice”, Socrates was a gadfly, set upon the city of Athens, by “the god”, to teach true human excellence, *arête*:

Be sure that this is what the god orders me to do, and I think there is no greater blessing for the city than my service to the god. For I go around doing nothing but persuading both young and old among you not to care for your body or your wealth in preference to or as strongly as for the best possible state of your soul, as I say to you: Wealth does not bring about excellence, but excellence brings about wealth and all other public and private blessings for men (Grube 1981, p. 35).⁴

This is from the *Apology* where Socrates is defending his way of life before an Athenian tribunal because he has been accused of atheism (questioning the gods of the *polis*) and

³ This transition of course is linked with cosmopolitanism, Socrates seeing himself as a “citizen of the world”. For more on the “cosmopolitan” strains in classical Greece, including considerable evidence within Homeric poetry itself, see (Harris 1927).

⁴ Compare this with Matthew 6:33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well”.

corrupting the youth. This question of defining “excellence” will be picked up later with Aristotle, but clearly Plato is advocating a shift away from the warrior vision of excellence celebrated in the Homeric poems towards the Socratic model. In the Platonic dialogue *Meno*, Socrates refers to virtue as “a gift of the gods” (Grube 1981, p. 88).

Besides the “divine” perspective of virtues, Plato also offers a “social change” perspective that would be influential. Interior psychological virtues or excellences should mirror and be shaped according to the social roles required for the good ordering of the *polis*. When this balance is achieved, with philosopher kings ruling the city just as reason rules the soul, “Calipolis” (the “beautiful” or harmonious *polis*) is possible. Plato’s *Republic* implied the radical ability of the political scientist/philosopher king to shape human nature. Indeed, Plato advocated the dissolution of the traditional structure of the family (as a way of transcending “mine and thine”; parents not knowing who their own children are)—something that Communism also attempted in its early stages. At the basis of this insight, dialectical in nature, is that “If man is formed by circumstances, these circumstances must be humanly formed” (Stevenson 1974, p. 57). The virtue tradition is thus not only about individual responsibility, but it recognizes the importance of social and structural influences on character.⁵ For Plato, this radical reshaping of the social order was, however, in light of an ascent “out of the cave” of unreality, to an Ideal Order. Virtues are part of a pre-existing moral order and are not merely the product of social convention as the Sophists taught.

There is another influential virtue tradition and that is the Stoics, founded by Zeno, just after Aristotle’s death. Like Plato, the Stoics were impressed by Socrates, largely by his

⁵ This point is important because the virtue tradition is often presented in a one-sided fashion: “Through action, then, a moral agent shapes his or her moral character, deliberately” (Rourke 2011, p. 252). This one-sided approach can engender a conservative “victim blaming stance”. Liberals, on the other hand, blame the system/structures, but it is “naïve to assume that the simple removal of unjust structures will undo the moral damage” (Tessman 2005, p. 46). Both sides, character/agency and structural/system based, are needed.

independence of character and indifference to circumstances. The Stoics believed in a universal Cosmic Providence or Order (like Plato)—but rather than reforming the present order in light of that higher Reality, pronounced that the good life consists in accepting that everything that happens comes from the Providence of God (Taylor 1989, p. 147). Poverty, pain, suffering and death are not evils and the truly virtuous person will be “indifferent to everything that happens to him” (Jones 1970, p. 326). Virtue for the Stoics was *apatheia*, “the peace of mind that comes through acceptance of the universe as it is” and an indifference to events (Jones 1970, p. 331). As is evident, this is quite incompatible with the idea of “change for the better” at the heart of human development and shows the difficulty of relying on Stoic accounts of virtue.⁶

However, the Stoics, believing as they did in the rationality of the cosmos, displayed an intense interest in science and in human nature in particular. They believed that happiness is living in harmony with and accepting the cosmic order, but the emphasis on universally shared human nature led to the apparently “new” idea of the universal brotherhood of man, or *cosmopolis*. It is worth highlighting that the “first” notion of cosmopolitan identity was birthed by the Stoics, and was done so with shared human nature as its moral basis. Both Romans and Christians borrowed this cosmopolitan idea, the former to justify the *imperium*, the latter, (but modifying its static nature to give room for action) on behalf of universal human concern. These cosmopolitan concerns function as the presupposition of modern development studies.

The Stoic’s cosmopolitan vision, however, would be stillborn. This is because the Stoics advocated the extirpation of all passions including pity and compassion as this impinged on self-sufficiency or *autarkia* (Nussbaum 1994, p. 508). Though the Stoic can view

⁶ Adam Smith, whom Amartya Sen relies on, borrowed primarily from Stoic understandings of virtues, including a sense of benevolent Providence (Peet and Hartwick 1999, p. 24).

humanity as one cosmopolitan family, other principles in their system militate against the passionate urge to change things for the better or being deeply bothered by human suffering. This aspect of Stoicism is fatal for an ethic of human development.

But an important point to reiterate here is that the ancients, despite their considerable variety, viewed the virtues as part of living in harmony with a larger “natural” order. This involves what Charles Taylor called “ontological accounts” that are “not only ‘gut’ feelings but also implicit acknowledgements of claims concerning their objects” (Taylor 1989, p. 7). The virtues involve, but are not reducible to, individual choice. However, it is important to note that Modernity, understood as a “turn to the self”, occurred in large part because these very notions of “nature” were used to justify indifference, or even terrible practices. Slavery was viewed as “natural” in the democratic *poleis*, as was the subordination of women, and other doctrines such as divine right of kings. Thus, to reform this “natural” order, meaning or purpose (value) was evacuated from things; nature was desacralized, disenchanted. As Charles Taylor points out, “The stress on relieving suffering has grown with the decline of this kind of belief” in a cosmic order. The thrust of the Enlightenment critique was “protesting against the needless, senseless suffering inflicted on humans in the name of such larger orders or dramas” (Taylor 1989, p. 13). It was in part the modern move toward the priority and dignity of the individual and the decline of an unchanging cosmic order that facilitated this concern with the alleviation of suffering.

However, if the ancients feared failure to live according to an objective moral order, the modern problem is quite the opposite: tumbling into the abyss of meaninglessness and nihilism where only choice has value and therefore all choices, no matter how sordid or noble, are equally unassailable. Both of these emphases, an unchanging cosmic order of nature, or the rebellion against this in individual freedom, pose severe dangers for human

development. This being noted, the account now will investigate the Philosopher who takes better account of this complexity, precisely because he gives a better (but ultimately insufficient) account of real development through time.

6.3 Aristotle: practical and contemplative reason

In order to understand the approach to virtues that has been most influential, one must, of course, come to terms with Aristotle and especially his *Nichomachean Ethics*. His is a much more sophisticated approach, steering between extremes of Stoic *apatheia*, and the radical reshaping of social conventions as in Plato's *Republic* (Nussbaum 1996, p. 370)). In order to introduce Aristotle's virtue approach, first some general reflections will be offered followed by an analysis of three principle terms: *arête* (virtue), *phronesis* (practical reason), and *eudaimonia* (happiness). The account will then turn to two dangers in the Aristotelian legacy relevant for development concerns. These are: a) the preference for contemplative reason over practical reason, and b) social exclusion. These twin defects have vitiated *both* philosophy and theology in terms of giving more serious consideration to human development. Later (chapter eight), it will be seen that EO countered the Aristotelian legacy by giving practical reason (*praxis*) priority to contemplative reason (*episteme*).

To begin, it is important to notice the parallel of the image-likeness (or Being-Well-being, Eternal being) distinction in Orthodoxy with Aristotle's influential terminology of *dunamis* and *energeia*. *Dunamis* is a power, a capacity, a potency or potentiality (the Latin is *potentia*) that is not yet an *energeia*, not yet an act, an exercise or an actualization of a capacity (Aristotle 2004, p. 311). It is also important to note that Aristotle distinguished between two different meanings of *dunamis*: one is a secondary sense and is the notion that something might happen by chance or merely be possible. Everything is, in a sense, in

the range of possibilities or chance—such as the chance happening of a person picking up a guitar and making noise with it. But there is a stronger sense of *dunamis*, and that is the sense of “good” possibilities, of not only acting in any which way, but acting *well*, acting in accordance with and developing the potentialities or *telos* (end or purpose) inherent in something.⁷ A guitar being played *well* by Andres Segovia is not the same as an amateur fumbling through basic chord progressions. Similarly, it is in the nature of human life not merely to be lived any which way, but to be lived *well*, with characteristic human excellences, and the virtues aim to define these excellences.

According to Aristotle, “moral virtue is a state of character concerned with choice” (Darwell 2003, p. 36) meaning that virtue involves freedom or agency, but it implies choosing well *qua* the quality of being human and the excellences pertaining therewith. This implies at least a relatively responsive view of human nature, that choosing well, or choosing poorly, can shape character. But the virtues are related to ontologically *structured* freedoms, the cultivation of dispositions, tendencies to act in certain ways given by nature, and tradition/custom (as historical experience) can provide helpful or harmful insights into nature’s intentions. This is *dunamis* in the second sense of the word above: choosing *well* within the range of possibilities. And this is what liberal philosophy has problems with, with the *teleology* implicit in the virtue tradition, that nature has purposes beyond, or at least not entirely reducible to, the exercise of individual choice.

Agency or choice is structured into virtues by practice and habituation. It is the result of consciously choosing (or having chosen for one but this is a lesser good) certain actions that over time become stable habits (*hexis*)—the role of iterative action in acquiring the relevant disposition or characteristic being key. Virtues can be said to be “the more

⁷ Sen’s formula for this is “value and have reason to value”, thus choosing *well* is choosing rationally. Undoubtedly this is right, but the question is if Western liberal accounts of reason that are highly individualistic and are often divorced from natural existence, can, in fact, have the bases to choose *well*.

enduring of a person's qualities" and come closer to providing a definition of the type of person one is (Zagzebski 1996, p. 135). However, the relationship between "nature", freedom, and virtue is complex. Aristotle writes:

The moral virtues, then, are engendered in us neither by, nor contrary to, nature; we are constituted by nature to receive them, but their full development in us is due to habit (Aristotle 2004, p. 31).

Nature then, has thrown open pathways or channels of choice within human experience. Virtues thus have to do with characteristic *spheres* of action or feeling, and the formation of morally correct tendencies exists within these spheres or channels.

Virtues' morally right tendency generally lies in a mean between excess and deficiency, virtue being the proper balance between the two extremes, vice being the defect of too much or too little. For example, in the sphere of "Fear and Confidence" (virtues have to do with dispositions as well), rashness is the excess, cowardice is the deficiency, and courage is the mean—the right amount. For the sphere of "getting and spending", there is prodigality, illiberality or meanness, and the right amount is liberality. Aristotle includes many other domains such as anger, conversation, pleasure and pain, self-expression, honour, social conduct and shame. Aristotle apparently does not claim to offer an exhaustive list. However, the virtues are aspiring towards the definition of an "excellent human" in various spheres of action and feeling, and this is constitutive of moral goodness and is good apart from subjective or external results. However, Aristotle believes that good results, feeling and consequences, often accompany virtue. "[P]leasure perfects the activities" and this is because the goodness or "bounty of nature is clearly beyond our self-control" (Aristotle 2004, p. 278).

Virtue ethics is a *practical* science meaning it is not enough to know or understand what good men are like, but the purpose is to actually act as good men act—the point is not mere

knowledge but action in line with the *telos* of becoming good men. Furthermore, it is not merely acting as a good man would act *ad hoc*, but it is habitual action intended for the formation of “character”, an enduring disposition to act in a reliably certain way. An occasional act of justice no more signals the virtue of justice than the appearance of a single swallow signals the arrival of springtime. Moral agents become brave by doing brave acts, temperate and disciplined by acting temperately and in a disciplined fashion. And the inverse is true as well: those who act intemperately, those who cannot control their appetites develop habits of excess or deficiency. Furthermore, this defect of incontinence affects one’s ability to reason well; strong appetites “drive out reason” (Aristotle 2004, p. 80). The actions that first sprinkle in the soul the seeds of the virtue in question, these same actions are also how the seed develops into the mature fruit of virtue. (*Ceteris paribus* for vice—but vice is “stably” unstable—it is a corruption or defect and weakens human nature).

For Aristotle, there are two types of virtues, one moral and one intellectual. Moral virtues are the sphere of *practical* science and include virtues such as courage, temperance, liberality and the aforementioned list. They belong to the arena of political life, debate among equals (free-born male landowners) in the *agora* or public space. Any “good” man or excellent human exemplar fulfilling his specific purpose *qua* human will ordinarily have these virtues. Human excellence is thus linked with being a citizen, that is, political participation, and this is the sphere of the variable, the “changing”. This, however, is for the “ordinary” aristocrat or citizen, those who are not able to engage in the more strenuous and “divine” activity of contemplation. This more divine activity is the exercise of the intellectual virtues and associated not with the moral or practical sciences, but with the universal sciences such as theology and geometry (the sphere of the invariable, or

unchanging).⁸ Practical reason is thus not the excellence of the philosopher who contemplates unchanging universals, but of the practical person, the politician, the statesman, the educator. This fateful distinction and prioritization of contemplation as more “divine” will be revisited shortly after the other terms, *phronesis* and *eudaimonia*, are investigated.

Phronesis is often called practical “wisdom” and the relevance of this term is seen in the fact that practical reason is called a science, but an inexact one. As mentioned above, Aristotle believed that virtue lies in a mean between excess and defect; this requires balance, and finding that balance⁹ comes not through definitional precision, or the stalwart application of moral principles to situational cases, but through experience, through practice and reflection on action and the outcomes of action. Again, it is not mere knowledge of the good or the good for or about man, but the domain of practice—of learning to *become* good through intentional action, prolonged experience therewith, trial and error, and thus the wisdom in judgement that accrues thereby. General moral laws, framed as universal truths, can never adequately grasp the particulars of a situation—they always admit of interpretation and application. Any science must admit of the definiteness, or precision (*akribeia*), which is appropriate to it. Moral virtue or practical reason can never admit of absolute precision because situations vary; principles hold “for the most part”. Courage is not always good and not to an unlimited degree; truthfulness can be exercised to a defect that violates other virtues (e.g. telling someone who has a handicap that he is unsightly). Still, knowledge and reason are required. Thus, Aristotle’s precise definition: “*Phronesis* is a true state, reasoned, and capable of action with regard

⁸ The theoretical/universal sciences are called *episteme* and are the sphere of the invariable. The practical sciences are *phronesis*, the sphere of the variable. The Greek mind had a preference for the unchanging, the universal, which was even more prominent in Plato than in Aristotle, but nonetheless persisted in Aristotle.

⁹ Not every action or passion admits of a mean; some are already vices as their very name suggests—shamelessness, envy, theft, murder, etc. (Darwell 2003, p. 19).

to things that are good or bad for man” (in Flyvbjerg 2001, p. 2).¹⁰ It goes beyond, but includes scientific knowledge of the universal (*episteme*), and technical or productive knowledge (*techne*). Some disciplines require less *phronesis* as they are related to information or abstract universals only (such as mathematics); disciplines such as ethics and especially political philosophy are the domain of *phronesis*. They require broad experience and are inappropriate for youth, no matter how much information or knowledge or grasp of scientific universals they have; youth lack experience fitting the particular to the universal.¹¹ The opinions of the experienced and recognized experts thus count for much in Aristotle’s moral judgments about the good life. *Phronesis* is the art of dealing with the imprecision inherent in moral action, the realm of probability versus that of certainty. Still, Aristotle designated it a moral *science* and argued that it is rational, capable of action and this in relation to what is good or bad for man.

Eudaimonia is the third major term, and is what *phronesis* “aims” at. *Eudaimonia* is often translated happiness—though this term can be misleading if not informed by other concepts. Aristotle’s virtue ethics are *eudaimonistic*, but not hedonistic (Aristotle 2004, p. xxvii). While happiness (*eudaimonia*) is the *summum bonum*, and happiness is indeed enjoyable, it is not about living a life of pleasure or immediacy in the common sense of the term. It is about higher order happiness, the pleasure that attends a) higher order functioning appropriate to humans *qua* humans, and 2) happiness over a lifetime. Only “the pleasure proper to a serious activity is virtuous” (Aristotle 2004, p. 265). Habitual drunkenness cannot be *eudaimonia* in that while it might bring pleasure to the agent, it diminishes action and higher order faculties, and will kill one prematurely. *Eudaimonia*,

¹⁰ Another translation puts this important definition slightly differently: “Practical wisdom, then, must be a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human goods” (Darwell 2003, p. 39).

¹¹ It is interesting that the exercise of practical reason requires greater maturity/age and is thus clearly a more complex human functioning than theoretical reason, yet the latter is still viewed as superior by Aristotle. Plato, and many others, however did not make this distinction in his treatment of the virtues (Zagzebski 1996, p. 139).

or true happiness, is based on the “bounty” or goodness of the natural order arranged such that “pleasure accompanies natural activity”. “Aristotle believes that the full realization of man’s faculties is both a worthy and a satisfying end to set before themselves” (Lloyd 1968, p. 244).

Thus for Aristotle all humans aim at happiness, but not all have complete or helpful notions of what their own happiness consists in. This is why Aristotle believes that some views of personal happiness need reforming, if not a complete overhaul. Aristotle references the “belly-gods” (Darwell 2003, p. 32) whose appetites dominate and diminish their capacity for both action and reason. *Eudaimonia* is, then, “activity of the soul in accordance with virtue”, soul meaning here nothing religious *per se*, but the living, animate person as agent, as originator of actions and possessor of dispositions in accordance with the right balance (as judged by the possessor of *phronesis*) between excess and defect. *Eudaimonia* is concomitant with acting on what is noblest and highest in human nature and the satisfaction that accompanies this, which is why “happiness” imperfectly captures Aristotle’s intentions. While happiness is not an altogether bad translation, *flourishing* or *well-being* is perhaps the more appropriate translation, for happiness must be over “a complete life”. It thus has a success orientation, life lived *well*.

So far, *arête*, *phronesis*, and *eudaimonia* have been put forward as three points of triangulation to obtain a bearing on Aristotle’s influential account of the virtues. There are, however, questions surrounding Aristotle’s formulation, perhaps the most important of which is: success for whom? To whom does his attractive account of human flourishing apply—and more significantly—not apply? If *phronesis* is reasoning about what is good or bad for man, then what is indeed good or bad for man, and is it only for males? Before exploring further dimensions of the virtue tradition, it is important to address the two problems mentioned above: that of withdrawal from social involvement by favouring

contemplation over *praxis*, and social exclusion. Both of these have vitiated Aristotle's legacy.

There is a fundamental tension within Aristotle's virtue ethics that was signalled above. Sometimes Aristotle speaks as if moral virtue (practical reason) is the *summum bonum* of human life, and that changing oneself (and perhaps the world) is the supreme good. For instance, Aristotle notes that "In justice is summed up the whole of virtue" because it is practiced not only for oneself, but for another, and "this is a difficult task" (Aristotle 2004, p. 115). Yet, at other times, and this seems to be the "chief thesis" of NE (Aristotle 2004, p. xxxi), it is the exercise of the intellectual virtues (contemplative reason) that is man's true and highest end. Contemplative "virtue" is exercising the mind (thus it is still an activity) with reflection on those things that are universal, which do not participate in change, and are *not* the result or realm of human action. Aristotle writes that justice as an aspect of moral virtue (practical reason) is inferior to contemplation because the latter is more self-sufficient. Justice requires dependence on "external" goods; it requires other persons for its exercise, while contemplation can be exercised alone, and is thus more "godlike" (Aristotle 2004, p. 70). This is an expression of the Greek value of *autarkia* mentioned earlier in the context of Stoicism—freedom from dependence on external goods or events.¹² Thus the first of Aristotle's difficulties, and one that passed over into both philosophy and theology, is the privileging of contemplation or *theoria* over *praxis*—the favouring of intellectual contemplation (the unchanging) over practical affairs (the realm of change) or the realm of human activity. This inevitably leads to the subordinating of justice concerns to theoretical speculation and thus a withdrawal or flight from practical affairs. As one commentator argues, Aristotle's locating happiness in some sort of contemplation leads to the idea that practical reason is "*pis aller*", an inferior pathway if

¹² This is not to be confused with *autonomia*: self rule, linked with the proper exercise of freedom.

one cannot mount up to the high road of theoretical contemplation (Aristotle 2004, p. xxxviii).¹³

This legacy has been decisive for Western thought, leading, among other things, to the alleged independence of cognitive states from feeling states, and to what Michael Stocker called a “purified view” of the intellect (in Zagzebski 1996, p. 138). The human person is understood largely in terms of rational capacities and these are best isolated and purified from contamination by emotional or biophysical states (these passions imply “change”). The most celebrated expression of this tendency (but displaced from a cosmic order and teleology) is Descartes *cogito ergo sum*: I think therefore I am. This hierarchy of human goods (contemplative reason over practical) has led to many difficulties in conceptualizing and advancing human well-being which have not gone unnoticed. One virtue theorist (from the Catholic tradition) argues that “the intellectual virtues ought to be treated as a subset of the moral virtues” (Zagzebski 1996, p. 139). A similar problematic motivates aspects of Sen’s latest work, *The Idea of Justice*. Sen is arguing in effect that development studies abandon the search for a perfect version of justice rooted in idealized thought (e.g. Rawls’ original position) and work on concrete problems of human injustices—the prioritizing of practical reason over speculative.

In light of Aristotle’s intellectualized vision of the human good, some argue that his is really a theory of *egoistic* eudaimonism, an elevated form of selfishness (Aristotle 2004, p. xxx). This seems too harsh inasmuch as it is clear, if NE is read with the *Politics*, that the *polis* is prior to the individual, the *polis* is his mother and the *polis* gives birth to the citizen. Nonetheless, there remain fundamental tensions between the claims of practical

¹³ For an alternative reading of the apparent dichotomy between the contemplative and the practical, arguing that Aristotle viewed *both* as necessary for the good life, see (Charles 1999). Nussbaum largely agrees with this approach in her treatment of Aristotle (Nussbaum 1996). Still, the overwhelming superiority of the “divine” realm, of the unchanging seems inescapable in Aristotle (Lloyd 1968, p. 303).

reason and contemplative in Aristotle. Even if it is argued that Aristotle's vision is not egoistic in any straightforward way, it can appear straightforwardly exclusionary, for it is a form of group egoism, and on two distinct fronts. First there is the exclusion implicated in the communitarian-ism of the *polis* that Aristotle is associated with by setting one *polis* over against another (and the arguments for the normalcy of this in *Politics* including the very nature of rationality itself). Second, there is exclusion within the *polis* based on privileging the intellectual virtues over the practical, (but noting that even both of these were aristocratic virtues). Intellectual contemplation conceived as the highest good of man as male has a "commanding" function, while practical reason, and even more so productive reason, are viewed as inferior functions—an argument Aristotle used to legitimate slavery and gender subordination.¹⁴ Philosophic males must be allotted adequate time and leisure to think well.

Given these problems with the Aristotelian tradition, one may wonder whether the virtue approach can meaningfully connect with human development. Perhaps a less problematic framework is preferred. This can be answered in several ways. First, the Aristotelian framework is still today very influential both within development studies and theology, thus critical interaction with it cannot be avoided. Second, it is likely that the success of human development as a moral project hinges on empowering it through the virtue tradition, or some equivalent. This is because the virtue tradition is linked with the practical work of training oneself for fulfilling one's social responsibilities. The third reason is that the virtue approach tends to better understand the necessary role of the community's responsibility to inculcate certain dispositions—to be angry in the right way, and about the right things, and at the right time. This greater "realism" about human nature and the communal requirements for the formation of moral character—the nettle of

¹⁴ With the complication that Aristotle argued that some slaves should be masters because of their superior intellects; he did not employ this argument for the female gender (Aristotle 1999).

which modern liberalism cannot firmly grasp—is among the reasons why Aristotle and the virtue approach is still being advocated today.

6.4 MacIntyre, feminist concerns, and his shift from narrative to nature

The strengths and weaknesses of the virtue tradition can be registered by how many and diverse, even contradictory, have been the thinkers claiming it through the ages. For example, Nietzsche and Machiavelli were part of the virtue tradition, as well as Thomas Aquinas, Frances Hutcheson,¹⁵ and the great Puritan theologian Jonathan Edwards. To complicate matters further, in some contexts the virtue tradition passed over to the more secular ruminations of David Hume and Adam Smith, no doubt in large part because the early Reformers repudiated it as will be seen in the next chapter. Virtues are sometimes viewed as purely natural properties (Foot 2003), having nothing to do with the supernatural, while others view them as half supernatural and half natural. (This also will be dealt with in the next chapter). Despite the diversity, virtue ethics has gained credence in modern philosophy since Anscombe's influential intervention (Anscombe 1958).¹⁶ Given the breadth of the literature involving the modern revival of the virtue tradition, the focus here must be extremely limited. This account will begin with a brief example of the continuing controversy around Aristotle and the question of gender and family through Alisdair MacIntyre, and note important shifts in his more recent thought that are relevant to this study, particularly his "return to nature". The account will then move on to a) virtues in the capability approach, and b) in the field of "positive psychology".

¹⁵ Adam Smith called Dr. Hutcheson the greatest of all the virtue theorists, ancient or modern (Smith 2002, p. 355).

¹⁶ This will be explained in the next chapter under the Catholic virtues as Anscombe was a Catholic thinker. MacIntyre was as well, but it will emerge below why he is kept in this chapter on philosophy.

Alasdair MacIntyre, significant in the renaissance of the virtue approach, developed an influential critique of Enlightenment morality which grounds itself in individual choice (MacIntyre 1981; 1988). Modern moral discourse for MacIntyre is narcissistic, morally degenerative, and should be replaced by virtues, largely as Aristotle described them. These virtues should not, however, be grounded in his controversial biological claims, but rather within social and cultural practices. Instead of appealing to Modernity's notion of consensus (social contract) and the unencumbered reason of free moral agents, MacIntyre notes that reason and action are situated within narratives and these are embodied in practices and traditions which are perpetuated by institutions. Human agency and reason are much more conditioned, communal, and linked to practice and local tradition than Enlightenment thinkers suppose. He developed an influential notion of "tradition" which is:

[an] argument extended through time in which certain fundamental agreements are defined and redefined in terms of two kinds of conflict: those with critics and enemies external to the tradition who reject all or at least key parts of those fundamental agreements, and those internal, interpretative debates through which the meaning and rationale of the fundamental agreements come to be expressed and by whose progress a tradition is constituted (MacIntyre 1988, p. 12).

These "fundamental agreements" give rise to (or also are produced by) specific practices and institutions and forms of reasoning, which are the "locations" of the virtues, and thus are *relative* to communal interpretations. Enlightenment liberalism itself is a tradition and upholds certain values. MacIntyre's narrative theory of human action has been attractive to religious types because it relativized the pretensions of Enlightenment rationality and provides a way of taking culture and religion seriously.¹⁷ However, there are problems with this narrative account that did not go unnoticed, and even by MacIntyre himself.

¹⁷ This sentence was adapted from (Thomas 2005, p. 85) who applied MacIntyre's approach to the study of international relations.

MacIntyre, according to his critics, fails to adequately address the sex biases and male chauvinism that was at the centre of the ancient virtues. For example, the feminist philosopher Susan Miller Okin berates him for failing to come to terms with the fact that the ancient virtues were elitist, asymmetrical, parasitic, and linked to bloodlust. Women's virtues or excellences were defined *in relation to men*, were completely private (domestic), while men's excellences were *not defined in relation to women* at all (Okin 1989, p. 50). In the ancient foundries of the Greek world where the links of the virtue tradition were hammered out, deep friendships were almost never seen as occurring between male and female. Noble bonds of equals within marriage or between males and females in general were inconceivable. Both Okin and Nussbaum argue that MacIntyre tacitly ignores these morally problematic features in his Aristotelian retrieval. His account of the virtues does nothing to counter these gender asymmetries.

In a later work however, and in a profound shift in his thinking, MacIntyre confronts these concerns. Aristotle's ideal was the *megalopsychos* ("great souled") who carries on an illusion of self-sufficiency (MacIntyre 1999, p. 127) and was often unresponsive and haughty to the vulnerabilities of others. Despite this, however, Aristotle was also the philosopher who was most sensitive to humanity's *animal* nature. MacIntyre confesses that in his earlier work, he tried to ground the virtues in social practices, making his account independent of Aristotle's controversial biological claims. However, MacIntyre writes, "I now judge I was in error in supposing an ethics independent of biology to be possible" (MacIntyre 1999, p. x). This mistake led him to "under-perceive" human vulnerability as a universal moral feature, and "over-perceive" the likeness between Aristotle and Aquinas. (Aristotle's virtue of *megalopsychos* was, in fact, replaced by Aquinas's virtue of *miser cordia* (the Latin translation of the important Biblical Hebrew word *hesed* or loving-kindness) which "has regard to urgent and extreme need without respect of persons".) Where MacIntyre previously grounded the virtues in distinctive

social practices and narratives, his new direction is more universal, “in nature”, and aimed at deeper reflection on what is “needed in order to actualize the distinctive potentialities that are specific to the human rational animal” (MacIntyre 1999, p. 9).¹⁸ Vulnerability and dependency are features of any life, anywhere, and the exercise of the *virtues of acknowledged dependence* are necessary for anyone to become independent reasoners (MacIntyre 1999). Note that the quintessential modern virtue of independent rational agency is affirmed by MacIntyre, but is highly dependent on humanity’s responsiveness to vulnerabilities emerging from their shared animal/biological nature.

MacIntyre is thus aligning his virtue approach less with social practices and more with nature and nature’s norms. But in one issue important for development contexts, such accounts only push key questions one step back. What features of human experience are to be counted in what is “natural”, intended by nature? The question resurfaces concerning the “naturalness” of the family and the related gender roles mentioned by Okin.¹⁹ Aristotle affirmed that the family was in nature, but he also, like most of the ancients (Thucydides 460-399 BCE), believed in the subordination and inequality of women. Modernity’s characteristic method for dealing with this is to argue, as does Martha Nussbaum, that the family structure cannot be intended by “nature” (nothing, for that matter can be) so women’s natural virtues can never be defined in relation to the needs of males or even of the family (nor can the man’s). This is to view the family as merely a

¹⁸ It is important to note here that MacIntyre’s position affirms nature/biology for many of the same reasons that the category of “nature” was affirmed in the earlier account on Trinitarian theological anthropology. This is to avoid the twin errors of disembodied agency in liberalism, and the communitarian-ism that finds no place for universal values. Thus MacIntyre’s account here should be seen as functionally similar to the way inclusion of “nature” was intended earlier in the Trinitarian theological anthropology. It has a distinctly cosmopolitan strain, but tries to affirm this while remaining grounded in human needs and particularity.

¹⁹ Liberals such as Nussbaum who affirm (in a sense) nature’s norms perhaps would argue there could never be a binding or natural norm between two persons; nature’s norms exist, but only for the individual. This however is not entirely true even on a purely empirical level. With the birth of children, there is a new biological “norm” (the baby) that is an ontological link, a link in the very genetic foundations of nature, pointing to the fact that natural norms do in fact exist in the “in-between” of persons, and not just in the individual.

social construct with no intrinsic value for human flourishing.²⁰ Gendered roles with their attendant responsibilities are, it is argued, not in nature, biology is not destiny, and society can be reconstructed to transcend this institutional relic (Okin 1999; Elshtain 2008, p. 216).

Rejection of the family as a norm in nature is indeed one way to conceptualize more equality in gender roles, but it is fraught with dangers (Berger and Berger 1983). There is another way to think about increasing justice within the family—and it is by a more egalitarian construction of virtues within nature’s intended structure of the family. Rather than seeking equality by defining women’s virtues with no regard for family because males have done so, perhaps another approach, and a better one for human development, is to not abandon “family” as being in nature but *redefine men’s virtues* in relation to women and the requirements of family life and childrearing. In other words, justice for everyone is better achieved by men’s virtues being more closely aligned to the excellences required for family building than by women abandoning theirs. This is strategic for *if* the family is indeed to function as the basic institution of justice, as many such as Okin argue it must, it will become so not by dislocating female roles from it, but by seeking justice, stability and marital affection by reforming primarily the male role and virtues within this naturally intended social structure.

This is vitally important because, as Susan Miller Okin points out, “Contemporary theorists of justice, with few exceptions, have paid little or no attention to the question of moral development—of how we are to *become* just” (Okin 1989, p. 21). Most liberals instrumentalize the family, but also other strong social bonds that can be important for instilling social virtues such as justice. In this regard, they have neglected the relevance not only of the family as the “earliest school of moral development”, (John Rawls being

²⁰ Martha Nussbaum does argue for relationality as an intrinsically desirable dimension, but there are many ways to fulfil this function and family is just one option among many.

one of the few who give it attention), but other strong communities that can shape sentiment for the moral ends of universal human development. Liberals tend to take mature, independent human beings as the subject of their theories “without any mention of how they got to be that way” (Okin 1989, p. 9).

Viewing the family as “natural”, as an “essential” structure for human well-being, with differences arising from various cultural traditions on the underlying basic structure, yet striving also for equality in gender relations, with a view especially to giving proper care to the critical needs of children in times of extreme vulnerability—this view (rather than arguing that the family is in no way nature’s intention) can undoubtedly help development studies interact with more traditional contexts and with religion. It can also help address Okin’s question of how moral formation actually takes place. Aristotle’s view of the family as in nature, corrected by MacIntyre’s account emphasizing vulnerabilities, supplemented with Nussbaum’s core human functions, can provide basic boundaries within which to affirm the naturalness of the family (and thus its intrinsic goodness), but safeguard it against abuses.

In tandem with this debate over the naturalness of the family, there is re-emerging interest among philosophers about the necessity of deriving “norms from nature”, however problematic and unstraightforward this might be (Antony 2000; Nussbaum 2001). Exploring nature’s norms involves, *inter alia*, exploring human virtues or excellences. To further illustrate the importance of the virtues for human development, it will be shown that weaknesses in Sen’s freedom-based approach can be rectified by their incorporation.

6.5 Virtues (almost) in Sen's Capability Approach

Sen is unlikely seen as a virtue theorist, and should not be considered one. But he is not a relativist and his approach edges at times rather close to virtue ethics. The aforementioned incompleteness of Sen's version of the CA is a strength for some applications, but ultimately it is a weakness—and the weakness should be addressed. Sen cites positively the Aristotelian connection with his work, one that he seized on *after* developing his theory, noting the similarity between “capability” and the Aristotelian notion of *dunamis* (Sen and Nussbaum 1993, p. 30).²¹ However, he intentionally fails to develop it along the lines of the virtue tradition. This is odd for Sen relies frequently on Adam Smith's moral approach, whom Deirdre McCloskey calls the “last of the former virtue theorists” (McCloskey 2008). Noteworthy here, Martha Nussbaum has pressed Sen publicly and in many of her writings on this issue. This section will bring in a few fresh arguments for why the CA (in the context of Sen's writings) calls for completion in the direction of a virtue approach.

It is necessary to interrogate Sen's ubiquitous formulation, “value and have reason to value”. But before attempting this, one should be cognizant of a prominent distinction in ethical theory that Sen's formulation is interacting with. This is the distinction between a) welfarist or subjectivist claims, and b) objective or perfectionist claims. Here is one of the clearest formulations of this distinction by Thomas Hurka:

Claims about the good, and especially about the human good are standardly divided into two classes: subjectivist or welfarist claims and objectivist or perfectionist claims. Welfarist claims make each person's good depend on certain of her subjective states, such as her pleasures or her desires. Hedonism, which holds that only pleasure is intrinsically good, is a version of welfarism, as are the views that equate a person's good with the

²¹ However, as seen above, Aristotle offers two meanings within *dunamis*. One is simply what is possible in a formal sense, and the other is what is appropriate or fitting or right. Sen's focus on capability (versus functioning) appears to focus on the former.

fulfilment of her desires. Perfectionist claims, by contrast, hold that certain states of humans are good objectively, or independently of their connection to pleasures or desires. Thus, perfectionists have held that knowledge, achievement, and deep personal relations are intrinsically good regardless of how much a person wants or enjoys them, and that their absence impoverishes a life even if it is not a source of regret (Hurka 1998, p. 181).

It is clear in light of this that Sen's lapidary "value and have reason to value" is affirming both of these—he is not a pure subjectivist ("utilitarianism" is Sen's whipping boy for welfarism) and has some "perfectionist" tendencies, but he is chary of delineating these and emphasizes "freedom to lead different types of lives".²² The argument here is that the formulation "value and reason to value" is not as safe as Sen believes it to be for reason is unstable (Ignatieff 2000) and it is precisely the role of virtues to give stability to reason's role in ethical decision making and action. This is what Adam Smith called "self-command" (Smith 2002, *passim*). Sen notes that the CA is combinable with other substantive ethical theories, and this "need not be a source of embarrassment". Yet he also notes that "the most powerful conceptual connections [with the CA] would appear to be with the Aristotelian view of the human good" (Sen 1992, p. 39; Sen and Nussbaum 1993, p. 46) which is the virtue approach—but again, one which Sen does not include. The argument here is that Sen's approach "yearns" for completion through the virtue framework to make his reliance on freedom and reason effective. Further, by omitting the virtue approach, Sen commits a logical fallacy known as "cherry-picking" which lifts key features out of their original—here virtue-inspired—context, to fit one's chosen hypothesis.

In mind here is Sen's frequent deployment of the Smithian thought experiment of the "Impartial Spectator" from Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The Impartial

²² Objective and perfectionist claims are not the same in Sen. Sen is strongly "objective" as seen from his arguments about positional objectivity (Sen 2002, pp. 463-83) where he argues that objective assessments can be made about the rightness or wrongness of an action, but that this assessment is not "position independent" (i.e. contextual features need to be factored in). However, perfectionism is more about the development of, or the perfection of features or functions of human nature (Hurka 1993). Sen appears perfectionist when he questions Rawls' distinction between the right and the good (Sen 1992, p. 40), but overall weakly so as he refuses to identify specific features to be developed.

Spectator has, among other roles mentioned by Smith (several of which are ignored by Sen), to “humble the arrogance of his self-love”, and to check the “natural preference which every man has for his own happiness above that of other people, [which] is what no impartial spectator can go along with” (Smith 2002, p. 97). Sen appeals to this “Smithian device” in many contexts and for many purposes (Sen 1999, *passim*; Sen 2009), among others to critique Rawls’ “law of peoples” as being parochial and insufficiently impartial (Sen 2002). This Smithian device is employed by Sen to somehow “guarantee” the virtue of impartiality, of employing reason correctly, along with other devices such as “positional objectivity” that take into feature local considerations and improve judgement (Sen 2009, p. 165-174). The problem here is that Sen has shown selective attention to Smith’s theory by severing this Ideal Spectator from its original virtue context—the very context necessary to “guarantee” in any sense the effective operation of this principle in the moral agent. This “ideal man within the breast”, this inner one “with the complete impartiality of an equitable judge” was psychologically linked in Smith’s corpus to his meticulously articulated and richly textured virtue framework. This virtue framework had as its aim putting one into that state of *self-command*, (or strength of character as might be said today) where one would 1) desire to seek the ‘advisements’ of the Spectator *in the first place*; 2) gain the fortitude to put the advice into practice, and 3) avoid or limit self-delusion that fails to allow one to view with honesty the deformities of one’s own conduct.

This is important because reason is a function of the entire, “willing”, organism. Reason is not a separate faculty that dominates others, but is in fact conditioned if not often dominated by them (Damasio 1994). Reason is subject to the passions, is knocked off course, and it was the role of philosophy in the ancient tradition to bring about that wisdom that is the product of an entire way of living, involving self-discipline, taming the “passions”, and stability of character in the pursuit of the good. Adam Smith understood this well, as does Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum 1994). Both inside and outside of religion,

a role of virtue cultivation was purification of the irrational passions²³ and of actually *becoming* a moral agent, not merely exercising in moral reflection. So there is a limited “perfectionism” in Sen inasmuch as he seeks to provide a hedge about his position for welfarism/subjectivism through the inclusion of reason, but it is weakly formulated. The formulation “value and reason to value” risks collapsing into merely valuing alone. This can eventuate in a Nietzschean will to power or less dramatically, a strain of hedonic subjectivism. But if Sen means by “reason to value” appealing to the broader features of humanity’s shared existence, the “conspecifics” or the shared particulars, then there is perhaps more room for agreement.

This, unfortunately, does not seem to be the case as can be seen by exegeting Sen’s distinction between *agency* achievements and *well-being*²⁴ achievements—a distinction which will now be explored in some detail as it reveals foundational divergences with EO. *Well-being* achievements are assessed based on the ability of the agent to pursue *one’s own* well-being (or have *one’s own* needs met by, for example, the State), while *agency* achievements are assessed based on a wider set of concerns, including *other regarding* concerns. These well-being functions are *intrapersonal* properties, which is to say properties only of individuals—they are strictly not interpersonal—and are “central to the *nature* of well-being” (Sen and Nussbaum 1993, p. 36). Note the reference to “being” language, and to nature—and the italics are Sen’s.

The problem here is that Sen’s definition of well-being as being strictly a property of individuals risks destroying any conceptions of human *unity*, and thus reasons for

²³Staniloae views this as a principal role of asceticism, to allow reason, understood as ethical impartiality, to play the leading role (Staniloae 2003). In one of the only theses linking Orthodoxy and the social sciences, this was the theme. A study of the *Philokalia* (an important text in Orthodox monasticism) showed:

The concept of the passions represents a sophisticated phenomenology of the inner life which explains why people fail to adhere to the virtues that they espouse and make judgements which do not withstand the light of reason (Cook 2010).

²⁴Exploring this will also clarify Sen’s terminology vis-à-vis the previous discussion on Well-being in Eastern Orthodoxy.

solidarity, not in individual choice. It risks instrumentalizing others for one's own well-being and does not do justice to the shared and relational ontology of human existence. This is because, according to the strict logic of Sen's construction of the nature of the person, one can be said to participate in the state of well-*being* without exercising any other regarding sentiments or actions. Or to put it more strongly, one can experience "well-being" if well-fed while others around one are starving. The contention here, and a plausible one if human development is in view, is that the "well-ness of a person's being" (Sen's alternate phrasing of well-being) should not be conceptualized without: a) the presence of other-regarding behaviour and especially distress at grievous injustices or capability failures, and b) the presence of meaningful relationships. Despite claims to the contrary, Sen's analysis of well-being does seem to be guilty of "methodological individualism" (Sen 2009, p. 243-47).

Sen's arrangement is a precarious one for human development because there is a deep lack of reciprocity: one's own well-being achievements, which are radically dependent on key others at key times in life, are subject to the realm of what appear to be the *optional*, the agency domain—they are not in the "way things really are" ontological category of well-*being*. Thus how one treats another and might permanently affect their well-*being*, is actually not in the category of well-*being*, but only of agency, of self-assumed choice. For Sen, moral responsibility lies not in the domain of "who we are", but only in the domain of "who I am".

This is not semantic hair-splitting for the problem with the agency/well-being distinction²⁵ becomes even more apparent when Sen (the "distinguished distinguisher") adds the category of well-being *freedoms* to supplement well-being *achievements*. Sen argues that

²⁵ Nussbaum questions this "prominently used" distinction of Sen's (Nussbaum 2000, p. 14) for a different set of reasons, arguing that it does not bring any extra clarity. Healthy functioning or well-being itself necessarily *includes* the exercise of agency, and is not merely a passive state of satisfaction.

this addition is important because should a particular adult be given an equal set of freedoms as others by society, but “muffs” the opportunities by, for instance, consistently over imbibing in alcohol, “it is possible to argue that no particular injustice is involved” (Sen and Nussbaum 1993, p. 39). Sen argues that this analysis applies to “responsible adults”. Yet it must be asked in all seriousness: can Sen’s notion of a person muffing it up in this way apply at all to the category of *responsible* adults in the normal sense of the word? The idea that someone can “muff their life” and that “no injustice is involved” violates basic moral intuitions on at least two levels. First, it is almost impossible to imagine how a “responsible” adult who squandered their life will not negatively affect their “moral community”. Sen’s example is fictitious and confounds the very meaning of the word “responsible”. Sen’s analyses fail to articulate how freedoms necessarily interconnect and persons are mutually constitutive—for good or bad. A second and perhaps more fundamental problem here is that this analysis implies that there is no duty to human “nature” itself. Does not common sense dictate that someone who muffs their life, even if no direct harm to anyone else can be discerned, be labelled morally irresponsible? Does this not do an injustice to life itself? For Sen, there can be no inherent duty to life itself.

Sen’s individualistic definition of well-being becomes more problematic still if the new research on subjective well-being (SWB), or happiness is taken into account. It is clear that SWB cannot be isolated from ISWB—*intersubjective* well-being. Much of this research is finding that moral goods like strong marriages and close relationships of all kinds, including religious participation, are closely linked with personal happiness (Myers 1992; Layard 2005; Bok 2010; Lim and Putnam 2010). (This is important for analyzing post-communist societies as depression seems to be directly linked with social atomization and loneliness (Schopflin 1990; 1993)). Furthermore, in regards to well-being, Sen’s association with Aristotle’s vision is thin indeed. For Aristotle, it is fundamental that

humans are social animals, that the family is intended by nature, and that “to live well” requires the intrinsic goods of political activity, that is, life together in the *polis*, which is also one of nature’s intentions.

Sen appears to be operating out of a voluntarist model, which has dominated the moral stage since the Enlightenment. It is a model that seeks to account for *all* moral responsibilities, both special and general (special responsibilities are towards those of kin, local neighbourhood, etc., while general are in virtue of someone else’s humanity). In this voluntaristic Enlightenment framework, all moral responsibilities are *self-assumed obligations*. They are not rooted in features of human nature, a cosmic order, community, or revelation but in individual human commitments and promises.

Sen is clearly in this tradition when he places other regarding concerns not in the well-being category, but in the agency category. Yet, there is a paradoxical result for Sen as the philosopher of *universal* human development, the philosopher of general responsibilities over against specialized (communitarian) ones. As Robert Goodin notes:

That model [the voluntarist], apparently virtually alone among all those that might account for our special responsibilities, would seem to justify our embracing those special responsibilities and those alone. The model of self-assumed responsibilities offers an alluring rationale for shunning any general social responsibilities over and above those we have explicitly or implicitly assumed (Goodin 1985, p. 29).²⁶

This is a powerful, if not devastating, critique of freedom based approaches in light of the concerns of human development. Sen tries to mask or has not embraced the full

²⁶ Goodin (like the later MacIntyre) locates the source of moral obligation in the vulnerability of others. Selznick argues that Goodin is only partially right and that it “is our own sense of identity and relatedness” that is the source of moral obligation (Selznick 1992, p. 204). Selznick argues, for example, that the ground of obligation in a family is the parental “role”, and not in the child’s needs (vulnerability). The argument here is that it can be both, and these are profoundly interconnected. How these two can be combined involves the communitarian-cosmopolitan argument that will receive fuller expression in chapter nine under *agape*.

implications of individual agency as the flimsy basis for human development that it actually is.

The virtue ethical framework, critically reconceptualised for human development concerns, can remedy a number of problems in Sen's approach, while not abandoning the importance of freedom. Virtues are agent centred (Tessman 2005, p. 3), emphasizing the role of moral choice and action in character formation. However, virtues, some of which are other regarding, are intrinsically good for the agent regardless of their perceived subjective benefit and thus *whether they are chosen* (Hurka 1998, p. 181). Virtues are intrinsically good for the agent and part of their goodness is because of what they do for another's well-being (e.g. the virtue of justice as the most complete virtue). Unlike the voluntarist tradition, the virtue tradition recognizes that there are real *tendencies*, norms in nature that are flouted at the expense of well-being. The virtue tradition also better recognizes the communal support required for value formation and human functioning, even if some traditions have been vicious examples. Bringing all of these together, human development virtues can be conceived of as *agency, structured within communities of character, on behalf of human solidarity*.

Virtue theory can assist in bringing about positive obligations and the practical activities that development requires. These go beyond the exercise of mere negative duties, probably the real limits of an approach grounded in self-assumed choice and individual reasoning. Adam Smith writes, and as a justification for a fuller virtue approach: "We may often fulfil all the rules of justice by sitting still and doing nothing" (Smith 2002, p. 95-6). Sen's approach faces this risk.

Academics are often guilty of seeking some "immensely simple theory ... that will turn out to give a humane society" (McCloskey 2006, p. 1311). Adam Smith also argued against

this tendency “of [thinkers] displaying their ingenuity, the propensity to account for all appearances with as few principles as possible” (Smith 2002, p. 353). Sen is culpable here with his abandonment of Smith’s virtue ethics, wanting to retain the rational advantages of the “Impartial Spectator” without the moral work implied. Sen’s thin sense of individual agency needs thickening, and revisiting Adam Smith would not be a bad place to start. With this recognition, the argument turns to two other approaches, both of which embrace in a fuller way the virtue tradition.

6.6 Nussbaum’s derivation of her list and the CSV (positive psychology)

Martha Nussbaum pushes Sen to articulate a more “perfectionist” stance. She writes:

It seems to me, then, that Sen needs to be more radical than he has been so far in his criticism of the utilitarian [subjectivist] accounts of well-being, by introducing an objective normative account of human functioning and by describing a procedure of objective evaluation by which functionings can be assessed for their contribution to the good human life (in Sen and Nussbaum 1993, p. 47).

As was seen in chapter four, Nussbaum develops a neo-Aristotelian version of the capabilities approach and she champions an “objective normative account of human functioning” that Sen lacks.²⁷ Nussbaum defends a set of *non-relative* virtues.²⁸ Nussbaum however, unlike the ancients, derives this universal list from a characteristically modern approach entitled “self-hermeneutics” (Maris and Jacobs 2012). This section aims to show that while this approach has some justification, it also faces important limitations.

It is important to recall the reasons for starting with the self and rejecting external metaphysical natural law or the “cosmic order”. As discussed earlier in this chapter,

²⁷ Nussbaum did soften her “essentialism” somewhat in later works (Jaggar 2006, p. 303), but the structure and purpose of the theory is the same, to justify a set of core human functions that offer an “ideal for the modern world” (Nussbaum 2000, p. 11).

²⁸ Virtue ethics is often considered relativistic/communitarian, with writers as diverse as Alasdair MacIntyre, Bernard Williams, Phillipa Foot and Michael Walzer cited as examples (Nussbaum 2001, p. 243).

traditional natural law theories posited an unchanging sacred order that was often used to justify indifference or various forms of discrimination. This “Platonic” natural order (often called metaphysical realism) understands moral norms and structures apart from human interpretation, intervention, or shaping (Nussbaum 1994, p. 29). Nussbaum, on the other hand, proposes a set of natural norms, but derives these from an exercise of self-hermeneutics or self-interpretation through which the human good can be discerned. Nussbaum is not naive to the obvious dangers here of perversions of desire (“preference deformation”) and subscribes to an “informed desire” approach, or what a mature agent *would* approve who is rational and critically scrutinizes their desires (Jaggar 2006). Nussbaum also occasionally mentions the idea of a therapeutic community as the context for the proper formation of preferences (Nussbaum 2001), but as has been seen, no nurturing community (including family) has a normative, intrinsic moral status given her stalwart commitment to the principle of each person’s capability.

It is clear though that Nussbaum’s approach, even on its own terms, cannot be adequately theorized on this “self-hermeneutical” basis. In fact, she often explicitly (and everywhere implicitly) appeals to another fundamentum. This is the principle of a shared human nature as a basis for moral obligation: “Compassion requires the recognition of a shared humanity” (Nussbaum 1992, p. 239) within which self-hermeneutics must take place. But similar to Amartya Sen, shared humanity is under theorized and why some argue Nussbaum lacks a theory of moral obligations (Gasper 2004, p. 187).

It is important however that the rationale for Nussbaum’s typically modern appeal to *self*-hermeneutics, and the related suspicion of nature and a “Transcendent” order, does not make sense within EO. Nature, in EO, is not conceived as a Platonic timeless order—which (according to Nussbaum) was carried over into Western ethics through Augustine

(Nussbaum 1994, p. 18).²⁹ Rather, due to the priority of persons in Orthodoxy, as well as nature being viewed as a dynamic order, it is “human agency [that] discovers and achieves new applications of nature’s laws in pursuit of more and more useful results” for the development of humankind (Staniloae 2000, p. 25f). This point of a malleable ontological/natural order, responsive to human agency, is fundamental in EO:

In the human person alone does the rationality of nature’s undefined possibilities acquire meaning or a purpose ... as a consciously rational being whose knowledge of the rationality of nature and its meanings keeps on improving, only the human person himself becomes more rational through nature. [Nature] is made complete by the rationality of the human subject who is also conscious of an inexhaustible wealth that is no monotonous repetition (Staniloae 2000, pp. 26, 29).

The ontological order is thus advanced to higher stages through human agency and creativity.³⁰ God intentionally created nature as an underspecified order that requires human creativity and ingenuity for its ongoing perfection.³¹ However, EO, unlike Modernity and Nussbaum, does not discard the natural order as having intrinsic or sacred value.³²

²⁹ Bradshaw writes: “The most striking feature of Augustine’s conception of being ... is its static character” (Bradshaw 2004, p. 224).

³⁰ John Meyendorff, a leading Orthodox thinker, argues that this dynamic theological anthropology “can prove itself to be an essential frame of reference in the contemporary theological search for a new understanding of man” (Meyendorff 1979, p. 2).

³¹ There has been much discussion of the “anthropic principle” by astronomers and cosmologists in recent years. This is the idea that the universe is fine-tuned to accommodate human life (Barrow 1988; Barrow and Tipler 1988; Kauffman 1995). Orthodoxy would add a “technotropic principle”, that the universe is also fine tuned to be responsive to human interventions and the discovery and development of nature’s laws and their application. This scientific knowledge is to be employed as a means of human solidarity.

³² EO does not polarize in the same way as the West between “nominalism”—which denies the reality of universals and deems real only individuals or particulars, and “realism”—which gives ontological priority to universals (Gillespie 2008). In fact, so alive have Orthodox been to this very issue that Photios, the great Byzantine sage of the 9th century, developed an alternative solution to this problematic (of the One and the Many), which cannot be entered into except to say that the “universal” exists, but is corporeal, instantiated in the particular material existence, and never without it, meaning that the universal is constituted by the particular, and vice versa. Furthermore, as emphasized, the universal itself develops through time and human agency (Tatakis 2007, p. 241).

In Orthodoxy, self-hermeneutics is possible, but it requires the virtues and the self to be embedded in a community committed to these (Harakas 1983). Staniloae notes that justice might have been derived from human experience, however:

If sin had not in part covered over our authentic human reality, we should not ourselves have to start from an idea of justice but we could begin from the reality of justice that is given within our own equality (Staniloae 1994, p. 216).

Dierdre McCloskey notes that for Nussbaum's approach to work, it must more explicitly incorporate the *moral* virtues—it must *start* from the idea of justice—and not merely rely on individual practical reason as the starting point (Gasper 2006; McCloskey 2006). EO corrects this fault by including the Samaritan commandment as a fundamental guideline and not merely relying on prudential (or instrumental) reasoning. This is important because determining “what is good or bad for humans” cannot reliably be done through an exercise in self-hermeneutics *simpliciter*, but rather through a hermeneutics *already* committed to working for human development.

At this point, the investigation of the virtues will, perhaps surprisingly, change directions and interact with a new approach. This shift is justified partly because Nussbaum's approach has been detailed in previous chapters, but also to demonstrate an important feature of development studies which is its multi-disciplinary nature. Development studies, as seen in chapter two, is not one species of social science, but rather is “multi-disciplinarity *sans frontières*” (Sumner 2006, p. 646). This shift is thus methodologically appropriate. But more importantly, this alternative version of the virtues can supplement weaknesses in Nussbaum's version. This assertion can only be explained after the basic features of the alternative approach have been given.

The alternative virtue approach is an outgrowth of the “positive psychology movement” led by Martin Seligman that is intended to supplement the Diagnostic Manual of Mental

Disorders (DMS) that focused primarily on diagnosing human dysfunctions.³³ Seligman and his colleagues point out that previous pictures of the person in psychology “assumed a diseased model of human nature” (Peterson and Seligman 2004). However, the point of departure of this new approach is not the disorders afflicting humans, but the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive. According to the *Handbook*, it represents the *first* attempt by the scientific community to identify and classify positive character traits of human beings. Positive psychology, “itself a new endeavour”, flows out of the Aristotelian tradition and uses similar terminology: virtue, flourishing, thriving, authentic happiness, *eudaimonia*. It aspires to be a genuinely scientific endeavour, to map out universally desirable features that obtain for humans as such. It is based on internationally applied research questionnaires with all the pros and cons that accrue to that methodology. Seligman openly admits that these are “aspirational classifications” given the incipient nature of the research and the relative novelty of the approach.

Within the Character Strength and Virtues (CSV) approach, there are six meta-virtues, and several sub-virtues for each; not all the sub-virtues are mentioned for brevity’s sake. These are: a) *Wisdom and Knowledge*: the strengths that involve the acquisition and use of knowledge (subcategories: creativity, love of learning, etc.); b) *Courage*: strengths that allow one to accomplish goals in the face of opposition (bravery, integrity, etc.); c) *Humanity*: strengths of tending and befriending others (love, kindness, social intelligence); d) *Justice*: strengths that build healthy community (citizenship, leadership, etc.); e) *Temperance*: strengths that protect against excess (forgiveness and mercy, humility, self-regulation); and f) *Transcendence*: strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning (appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, spirituality).

³³ In terms of further justifying the inclusion of Seligman’s approach in this discussion, Nussbaum asserts that he “has one of the few profound and excellent minds in the field” of psychology (Nussbaum 2001, p. 101).

In addition to this structure, each of the virtues is associated with a specific role model who paradigmatically illustrates that trait such as Martin Luther King for hope.

A further justification of this list as a supplement to Nussbaum's is now possible. First, it is important to note that Nussbaum, while she emphasized practical reason in her list, did not specify in detail the "moral" dimensions on her list. The CSV retains important moral features of Aristotle's multi-dimensional list, while correcting for the elitism, and includes virtues Aristotle would not (e.g. humility, forgiveness, hope, etc.). Second, the political focus of Nussbaum's list (if not supported by other approaches) actually may undermine agency, or at least not provide the moral resources for agents and communities to develop the strengths to engage positively in human development themselves (Gasper 2006; Giri 2006). Third, and related, the normative dimensions in Nussbaum's list are conceptualized around what States should provide for their citizens, not in terms of how values form (Deneulin 2011) or what citizens can, or should become in terms of civil society actors and holding states accountable. Fourth, the idea that the state is to guarantee these dimensions, while not unimportant, is inadequate for post-communist cultures. The history of Communism in relation to the state shows that other pathways of human well-being are often necessary in the face of an unreliable state. Fifth, the focus on values like moral integrity (included in the CSV but not included in Nussbaum's list) can help resist corruption and facilitate the state actually playing the positive role Nussbaum envisions for it, versus a predatory one. (Strong communitarian "islands of virtue" are often necessary for this.) Nussbaum, in her vision of a society that ensures capability development, is over optimistic concerning the state's "ability to inculcate the right attitudes and sentiments in people" (Nussbaum 2006, p. 411).³⁴ Rather, as Vaclav Havel said so well, "Without commonly shared and widely entrenched moral values and obligations, neither the law, nor

³⁴ This is not to be taken as an argument against a role for the state; but just that it is naïve to rely on this, just as Nussbaum would argue it is naïve to rely only on the family.

the democratic government, nor even the market economy will function properly” (Havel 2000, p. 401). And finally, the CSV list provides a more spiritual overall picture of human well-being, including virtues like gratitude, forgiveness, and self-control. Obviously important is the distinct role for the virtue of Transcendence, which merits further comment.

Spirituality and religiousness as practices and beliefs are described as “persuasive, pervasive, and stable”. But not only is the virtue of Transcendence included as one of the core virtues or excellences in the CSV account, but *it is a strength that enables other strengths*.³⁵ This is because through the virtue of Transcendence, life itself is viewed as “sacred”, the world is perceived “as a more coherent place” (Peterson and Seligman 2004, p. 609), and meaning is attributed to human action. Moral excellence requires habituation, discipline, and motivational reasons for acting one way and not another—choosing the hard right versus the lazy wrong. This sense of Transcendent *purpose* can help explain why religion adds strength and is a motor for the other virtues or human powers. This is a radical departure from viewing religion as a defect—as an opiate for material scarcity due to defective relations of production (Marx), resentment buried as repression (Nietzsche), unfulfilled wishes (Freud), or unreasoned conviction (Sen). It appears that the CSV or positive psychology approach is among the first social science frameworks to view religious faith in a positive light.

³⁵ One reviewer of the work of Peterson and Seligman on universal human virtues writes:

Although Peterson and Seligman are agnostics, they have now observed in their own analytic work that spiritual faith is a major dimension of character independent of hopeful self-directedness and charitable cooperativeness. Their finding confirms earlier psychometric work showing that spirituality is an important dimension of character that contributes to well-being ... I hope that the authors’ integrity and open-minded humility will serve as an inspiration for other empirically minded humanists to evaluate the adequacy of their own worldviews, no matter what conclusions they may reach (Cloninger 2005).

Within this category of Transcendence there is much to be appreciated; there are also, however, important concerns. The overall approach appears at times too “Protestant”, too, individualistic and indebted to William James’ influential understanding of religion as “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine” (James 1999/1902, p. 31-32; Peterson and Seligman 2004, p. 601). This is inadequate for an EO Trinitarian intelligibility; undoubtedly other traditions as well. And where such narrow understandings of the nature of religion prevail, misunderstandings by the social sciences will continue to prevail as well. But the CSV signals the potential for a remarkable improvement between the social sciences and religious faith precisely at the nexus of the virtues.

There is one final issue that must be revisited from a new angle, and this is the relationship between the communitarian and cosmopolitan dimensions of the virtues. Virtues have *tended* to be associated with communitarian positions. For instance, Aristotle notes that “the excellence of the citizen must be relative to the constitution for which he is a member” (Aristotle 1999, p. 65). It seems clear however that should the virtues be reoriented towards human development, this requires a shift. It would require the continued recognition of the intrinsic importance of concrete “communities of character”, but these aiming for the inculcation of cosmopolitan, or “Samaritan”, or what the CSV list calls virtues of “humanity”. However, this presents a dilemma: the more cosmopolitan the moral commitment the more strenuous would seem to be the requirements of communitarian socialization. The further persons extend outward in serving generalized humanity, the deeper and stronger must be the roots, the resources that nourish these very commitments. This can be called the communitarian-cosmopolitan paradox: the virtues conceptualized for human development will require robust communitarian features to build human strengths but also inspire a vision and cultivate the moral sentiments toward

universal social inclusion. This necessitates a theory that simultaneously values these particularistic loyalties (unlike liberalism), but orientates them both to a) the good of *each* of their own members but b) aspiring for the well-being of all. As mentioned, the basic features of such a theory were already given by St. John Chrysostom where the family constitution is understood as an intimate moral community whose primary spiritual function is the inculcation of cosmopolitan virtues (Spidlik 1986). The Church has the right to make such suggestions about the nature of the familial constitution inasmuch as it is the Church that continues to value and sacralise this bond.

The different perspectives on human excellences offered in this chapter are important inputs for the emerging literature that views virtues as a key bridge between religion and human development. For example, “building communities of character” in partnership with faith communities is theorized as a basis for partnership between faith based communities and secular development agencies (Thomas 2004; 2005, p. 206). These conversations, while helpful, have often neglected to address *which* aspects of character are desirable or undesirable, and for *whom*. Inadequate moral criteria or safeguards against defective understandings of the virtues can leave them *too* locally determined. Further reflection on the shape of the virtues—and especially their simultaneously individual, communitarian, and universal dimensions—is necessary. The voice of the CSV, which appears “religion-friendly”, but arising from the social sciences and offering a universal perspective, can aid this conversation—not only in terms of what States might be expected to provide *for* their citizens, but what persons and religious communities can expect from themselves and each other.³⁶

³⁶ For many Orthodox countries the public role of the state in supporting religion is attractive, and in part because of the public repression of religion under Communism. In Romania for example, the strict separation of religion between public and private is unlikely. Following the influential criteria of the “Twin Tolerations” of political theorist Alfred Stepan, an established Orthodox Church is clearly not incompatible

The inclusion of religious faith as a strength within the CSV approach is provocative and can serve as a bridge between faith and development extending from the side of the social sciences. But besides being provocative, it is also paradoxical because these same authors assert that Christianity is incompatible with virtue ethics:

Moral philosophy changed with the growing influence of Christianity, which saw God as the giver of laws by which one should live. Righteous conduct no longer stemmed from inner virtues but rather from obedience to the commandments of God (Peterson and Seligman 2004, p. 10).

This is a gross oversimplification. However, one aim of the next chapter is to show why this oversimplification occurs and occurs so often. Briefly, the account will show that the early Reformers did indeed repudiated the virtue tradition, and that hidden within this are keys to understanding what one author called “the unnecessary shipwreck between faith and humanism in the Enlightenment” (Bradshaw 2004). At any rate, why faith collided so strongly with humanism in the West is a complex issue. A largely unexplored reason for this collision can be seen through an analysis of the virtues in Western theology.

with consolidated democracy (Stepan 2000), even if some control must be (and has been) relinquished. “With the exception of France, Western European democracies depart from the strict separation model” (Stan and Turcescu 2000, pp. 38-9).

7. THE VIRTUES IN WESTERN THEOLOGY

As mentioned in the last chapter, the virtues are emerging as a promising bridge between religion and development studies. However, on closer inspection, the passability of this bridge quickly becomes uncertain. This is because, while on the one hand the virtue tradition is endorsed by Catholicism, and as will be seen also by EO, nonetheless it is asserted to be actually *incompatible* with Christianity (Schneewind 1998; Peterson and Seligman 2004). If the virtues can indeed provide a conceptual bridge between “the Worlds of Development and Faith” (Thomas 2004; 2005; Marshall and Saanen 2007), perhaps understanding why the virtue tradition is considered incompatible with Christianity can illuminate aspects of the tensions between faith and development. Furthermore, if there are problems in this regard, it is important to discern whether this is a generalized incompatibility between virtues and Christianity, or is rather endemic to a particular tradition.

Why then do philosophers and social scientists consider that Christianity is incompatible with the virtues? Because, as the first part of this chapter will show, with the exception of a few thinkers, Protestants from Luther until Barth tended to ignore or reject outright the virtues. This rejection of the virtues is explored as a *conceptual* difficulty for connecting the realms of religious faith and human development in the West. A second aim of this chapter is to investigate the Catholic approach to virtues. Catholics on the one hand vigorously affirm the virtue tradition, but on the other tend to separate them into natural and supernatural categories, which (apart from being odd from an Orthodox point of view) presents its own but lesser difficulties for conceptualizing the relation between faith and development. This has not prevented profound contributions to human development through the papal encyclicals, in part linked with the changes occurring at Vatican II, and the affirmation of a “new” virtue aimed specifically at human development, solidarity.

This investigation into the Protestant and Catholic approaches to virtues also serves as a necessary foil to understand EO virtues and their specific relation to HD which will be developed in subsequent chapters. However, prior to investigating the Protestant and Catholic approaches, a few words will be said about heroism. Recovering the sense of heroic action within the virtue tradition may prove vital for meeting human development challenges, many of which are daunting.

7.1 Heroism and Human Development

Ethical systems admonish equality, and the virtues also do this, but virtue ethics recognizes the importance of public praise for deeds that are especially noble in service of one's community. Thus the virtue tradition sanctions inequality on behalf of equality, the possibility of *heroism* and the necessity of its celebration through public ritual. Hannah Arendt writes concerning ancient Hellenic politics that its art was to bring forth the great and the radiant—and echoing Democritus: “as long as the *polis* is there to inspire men to dare the extraordinary, all things are safe; if it perishes, everything is lost” (Arendt 1998, p. 206).

It will not come as a surprise for anyone who has spent time reflecting on this dynamic of heroic action, the community's necessary role in this, and the role of corporate memory, to notice parallels between the heroes celebrated by the Greek *polis* and the Saints celebrated in the Church, both East and West. While the structure and the imagery are remarkably similar, the moral ends are not. A liturgical reading in the Orthodox Church Calendar proclaims in the context of the saints' lives, “*Great are the achievements of faith*”. Saints are heroes for the faith: athletic and martial imagery is employed; virtue and glory are celebrated. Saints who are martyred are called “hoplites for Christ” and the arena of contest is often described in gladiatorial terms; blood is splattered, necks are crushed by

ram's horns. But it is not the saint doing the crushing as in typical celebrations of martial virtues. The saint (or here martyr) is the one being crushed in service to and imitation of Christ's love for humanity.

The purpose of these heroic accounts in the life of the Church is to celebrate the memory of those who accomplished great actions for humanity,¹ imitating God's love for humankind, His *philanthropia*.² There is a celebrated category of saints in the early Church, the Holy Unmercenaries (literally the "holy ones—without silver") who, in conspicuous contradiction to the conventions of their day, offered medical and healing services without charge, that is, without silver. Each of these Unmercenaries (seven sets total) are granted their own respective celebration day, and there is a special Sunday *Synaxis* (or service, same root as synagogue or "coming together") celebrating all the Unmercenaries. Traditions of faith nourish such commitments, celebrate them, and encourage them in others. Staniloae sums up these sentiments well, even if laconically: "those who make special efforts on behalf of the good of all should enjoy a particular honour" (Staniloae 1994, p. 217). Similarly, Staniloae quotes Maximus saying "God, by nature good and without passion, loves each person equally, but glorifies the virtuous" (Staniloae 2003, p. 307). There are in these formulations a "cosmopolitanism" of God's

¹ The Church calendar states on All Saints: "we the pious honour all the Saints, the friends of God, for they are keepers of God's commandments, shining examples of virtue, and benefactors of mankind" (Monastery 2012). One striking example is St. Telemechus, a monk "from the East", who dared to stop a gladiatorial combat in progress, knowing that he himself would be martyred in his attempt to bring an end to this atrocity. As he tried to stop the fight, the "sanguinary [bloodthirsty] spectators" descended on him and stoned him to death. This pricked the Emperor Honorarius's conscience and contributed to the final banning of gladiatorial combats around 404 a.d. (Theodoretus 1844).

² Often enough, the Church calendar celebrates bizarre feats such as living atop a pillar ("stylite") for decades, or living in a hole for extended periods in social isolation, acts concerning which it may prove challenging to link with a theology of human development. Staniloae has provided theological cautions about spiritual heroics rooted apparently more in Greek ascetical practices and an antipathy of material existence than positive love. Other prominent voices within Orthodoxy, such as Paul Evdokimov have registered similar reservations about spiritual leaders such as Arsenios the Great who enjoined "Flee from men ... and thou shalt be saved" (Evdokimov 2001). Staniloae calls for a new, positive asceticism, positive and obligatory for all (Staniloae 2000, p. 6).

love, the “good for all”, but also a special glory (*kudos*) for those who display these virtues that benefit humankind.

The history of development achievements, while involving structural or environmental transformation, usually requires sacrificial, heroic activity and often over a lifetime (Bornstein 2004). William Wilberforce’s campaign against slavery in the British Empire is a powerful example of a religiously inspired “hero for humanity” (Belmonte 2002).³ This heroic activity, however, often requires strong communal identities as a source of values. Heroic virtue is not likely to emerge full grown from liberal neutrality, as did Athena from Zeus’s head in Greek mythology. This can be framed as a “law” of development: sustained action for justice or human development is highly implausible without a corresponding plausibility structure (Berger and Luckmann 1989) that provides a “social imaginary” (Taylor 2004), which is to say a community of expectations.

William James is a modern philosopher who reconceptualised the ancient virtue tradition for human development. He notes that the virtue tradition was closely allied to martial values;⁴ military heroism “was the gory nurse that trained societies to cohesiveness” (James 1962, p. 314). William James correctly sensed that this strong heroic ethic cannot be abandoned as liberalism implies; rather, it must be retrained. He writes in his classic essay “The Moral Equivalent of War”:

The martial type of character can be bred without war. Strenuous honour and disinterestedness abound elsewhere. Priests and medical men are in a fashion educated to it ... We should be owned, as soldiers are by the army, and our pride would rise accordingly. We could be poor, then, without humiliation ... The only thing needed

³ Wilberforce was an evangelical Christian and his work to fight slavery emerged from these commitments. This is a significant point to ponder for a secular mentality that sees faith as irrelevant to human development. A noted human rights scholar writes: “All human rights activism in the modern world properly traces its origins back to the campaigns to abolish the slave-trade and then slavery itself” (Ignatieff 2000, p. 293).

⁴ The word hero comes from the Greek and meant warrior, or protector.

henceforward is to inflame the civic temper as past history has flamed the military temper (James 1962, p. 326).

But how is this to happen? James' solution rests on two features, one highly "liberal", one highly coercive. The first is his recognition that global injustice and the caprice of fortune *can* arouse pity and moral indignation in reflective minds and be a motivation for bold action. This is unproblematic. But then he offers the mechanism for turning "can do this" into "will do this" and it is nothing other than *forced* conscription of entire populations of youth into global humanitarian service.

James' proposal for tapping the heroic ethic swings wildly between the branches of free moral reflection and coercive conscription.⁵ An alternative proposal however, and one in line with the overall approach of this thesis, is that in the global fight against poverty, religion can and should (and already does) play a more profound role than is currently recognized in fostering heroic virtues necessary for human development—one that relies more on the *internal* motivating power of tradition and less on the *external* power of government coercion. Religion is perhaps the only non-coercive "authority" that has a chance to strongly encourage this with any legitimacy. Jacques Maritain, who will be examined later in this chapter, notes:

It is impossible for a vitally Christian transformation of the temporal order to come about in the same manner and by the same means as other temporal transformations and revolutions. If it is to come about, it will be the result of Christian heroism (Maritain 1973, p. 120).⁶

The heroism embedded in the virtue tradition provides further reasons for suggesting it as a link between theology and human development. But as has already been mentioned, not

⁵ Forced volunteerism however, does not work and has left a civic vacuum in post-communist cultures where a major research questions is: "Why don't people volunteer?" (Howard 2003; Robertson 2009).

⁶ For Maritain, the US industrial grassroots community organizer/agitator Saul Alinsky, embodied Christian heroism (Doering 1987). He called such persons a "prophetic shock minority" (Maritain 1951).

all Christian traditions are likely to see the excellences of the virtue tradition. The account now turns to Protestantism, which is one.

7.2 Protestantism's difficulty with the virtues

At the end of the previous chapter, it was noted that Christianity is perceived as incompatible with the virtue tradition. Similarly, a premier Enlightenment scholar J.B. Schneewind's asserts that "Christianity itself, however, suggested serious moral misgivings about an ethics centred on virtue" (Schneewind 1998, p. 287), and there are similar claims.⁷ This section attempts to address the causes and significance of this misunderstanding that is so persistent despite the centrality of virtues not only within EO, but also Catholicism. However, before exploring these issues it is important to address whether it really matters if Christianity is incompatible with the virtues.

If Schneewind and others are correct in asserting Christianity's incompatibility with the virtue tradition, it could suggest that Christianity is incompatible, or at least ill-fitted, for the moral demands associated with democracy. Schneewind does not place the point so sharply, but it is clear that this question is not far off stage and that it was not far from the minds of many Enlightenment thinkers. Schneewind raises the question of whether democracy is based on a morality of *obedience*, or upon *self-governance*, what Adam Smith called "self-command". Schneewind believes that the latter is the requirement for democratic societies.⁸

⁷ See also: (Rachels 1998, pp. 669-670), "[for the ancients] 'the virtues' occupied centre stage in all their discussions. As time passed however, this way of thinking about ethics came to be neglected. With the coming of Christianity a new set of ideas was introduced. The Christians, like the Jews, were monotheists who viewed God as a lawgiver and for them righteous living meant obedience to the divine commandments". The author goes on to cite St. Augustine as the root of this shift and his distrust of reason.

⁸ However, Schneewind does point out that "The ethics of self-governance was created by both religious and anti-religious philosophers" (Schneewind 1998, p. 9).

The conception of morality as self-governance provides a conceptual framework for a social space in which we may each rightly claim to direct our own actions without interference from the state, the church, the neighbours, or those claiming to be better or wiser than we. The older conceptions of morality as obedience did not have these implications (Schneewind 1998, p. 4).

Christianity, as will be seen, is often assumed to be equivalent to a “Divine Command” theory or an ethic of obedience to law (deontology). This “morality as obedience”, unlike the self governance mode (virtues), means that the human person is seen as more fitted to be ruled in what has often been called “slave morality”, and not to the dignity and freedom of self-rule. This morality of obedience has historically not embraced the relative equality of moral capacity (Schneewind 1998), another feature of democracy associated with universal enfranchisement and the notion that all persons have a moral right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. The important point here is that if democracy requires self rule, the stakes for rejecting virtue theory in favour of simple obedience to an external authority may indeed be high.⁹

In what follows, the argument will review this rejection of the virtue approach in Protestantism *via* Luther and Calvin, and bring these effects up to date with Karl Barth. It is to be kept in mind that this account is primarily trying to address the very limited question of why virtues could be perceived as incompatible with Christianity and secondarily, to raise the more challenging question of whether the rejection of the virtues represents a *conceptual*¹⁰ incompatibility between faith and development within Protestantism. In attempting to answer this, it is to be noted that at least two things

⁹ Stanley Milgram’s important experiments show how “obedience to authority” can over-rule personal moral values and “persuade” individuals to willingly perform actions (e.g. shocking a person in a memory experiment with a potentially harmful, if not lethal, 450 volts) that he would otherwise find horrifying (Milgram 1974).

¹⁰ This term “conceptual” is being emphasized because the argument is *not* that Protestantism has not made great contributions to human development. The question is over what the rejection of virtues may have meant for the relationship between, and even perhaps generating, a Western form of humanism that all too often viewed itself in opposition to Christianity.

happened in Protestantism. The first was the *transformation* of the virtues where they were not rejected, and the other, was their outright *rejection*.

In terms of their transformation, the virtues were made more difficult in that a) human inability and moral corruption were emphasized through a doctrine of original sin, simultaneously with b) making the virtues even more morally rigorous and demanding. Under this tendency, the virtues became so elevated and often so “other regarding” that they in many ways ceased to be human virtues at all—not rooted in actual human sympathies and emotions. Adam Smith critiques this tendency in Dr. Hutchenson who believed “that virtue must consist in pure and disinterested benevolence alone” (Smith 2002, p. 356) and anything falling short of this was either morally irrelevant or blameworthy. As was often the case, the virtues were related to an understanding of Divine *agape* that was in sharpest contrast from human *eros*; any form of self-interest, reciprocity, or any concern for “special relations” such as family excluded the sentiment in question from the category of virtue altogether. This transformation of virtue often had similar features to that of Kantian liberalism such that “Regard is for every person *qua* human existent, to be distinguished from those special traits, actions, etc., which distinguish particular personalities from each other” (Outka 1977, p. 9).

These tendencies to elevate virtues beyond natural morality are evident in the great Puritan thinker Jonathan Edwards who welded Lockean psychology to Calvinism (Holbrook 1973). Edwards writes:

A selfish, contracted, narrow spirit is generally abhorred, and is esteemed base and sordid. But if a man's affection takes in half a dozen more, and his regards extend so far beyond his own single person as to take in his children and family; or if it reaches further still to a larger circle, but falls infinitely short of the universal system, and is exclusive of being in general; his private affection exposes him to the same thing, viz., to pursue the interest of his particular object in opposition to general existence: which is certainly contrary to the tendency of true virtue (Edwards 1765/1960).

Affection that is not rooted in love for the “universal system” is a form of self-love and ultimately sinful. Edwards stressed the distinction between natural virtue and “true” virtue, and he even called persons living by the former “altogether hateful” in God’s eyes (Holbrook 1973, p. 23). Edwards required that the virtues go beyond even cosmopolitanism—a concern for all of humanity as the criterion of virtue—to a cosmic scope, love of Being itself. Yet Edwards had a dim, if not morbid, view of human moral ability. Edwards writes: “As innocent as children seem to be to us, yet if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God’s sight, but are young vipers, and are infinitely more hateful than vipers” (in Lee 1987, p. 118). So it is not true that within Protestantism there is no virtue tradition as some scholars hold. But there is the tendency to transform the “human” virtues by severing them from natural sympathies and downgrading the relevant moral capacities of humans.

But more often than transformation, there is an even stronger tendency within Protestantism to reject outright the virtues, viewing them as an opposing factor to grace—or in other words, “Obedience to virtue is far removed from obedience to God” (Minear 1946, p. 48).¹¹ This tendency is widespread enough that noted Yale ethicist Gene Outka asserts, “Protestants object to any claim that certain agents possess something laudatory or that such a state can deliberately be cultivated” (Outka 1977, p. 146). Or more succinctly, Protestants reject the virtues.¹² Given this widespread dynamic, it was natural that: a) the

¹¹The larger context of this quote is worth mentioning, as well as the fact that ethicist Outka cites this as representative of Protestant attitudes to virtues. This quote can also help make clear the rationale behind the Divine Command Theory which will be discussed further below.

The Bible ethic remains throughout an *ethic of present decision* ... Obedience to God cannot be absorbed into a stable character pattern so that each subsequent decision becomes easier and more assured ... However many times repeated, it does not become a fixed personality trait. Every present moment presents a new occasion for disobedience as well as a new need for divine help. When one objectifies obedience as a virtue to be cultivated, his choices become determined by his relation to that virtue rather than by relation to God (Minear 1946, p. 48; Outka 1977, p. 146).

¹² Here is further confirmation of this important, but controversial point by a Protestant theologian: “Protestants have typically understood grace to be primarily God’s extrinsic act of forgiveness. If they

torch of the virtue tradition passed over to secular Enlightenment scholars such as David Hume and Adam Smith, and b) social scientists would assert that “Christianity” is incompatible with the virtue tradition. Today, very few prominent Protestant theologians embrace the virtues; Stanley Hauerwas (investigated below) and more recently N.T. Wright (Wright 2010) being two exceptions.

The roots of this entire tendency can be exposed by digging back to the early Reformers. Luther rejected the virtues and loathed Aristotle, especially the *Nichomachean Ethics*:

This pagan has attained supremacy, impeded and almost suppressed the Scriptures of the living God ... I cannot avoid believing that the Evil one introduced the study of Aristotle ... his book on Ethics is worse than any other book, being the direct opposite of God’s grace and the Christian virtues ... Oh! Away with such books from any Christian hands (in Schneewind 1998, p. 32).

Calvin was hardly less pessimistic about relating Christianity to the virtues. Virtues have nothing to do with redemption, though there was perhaps some relevance for them in the political arena:

As for the virtues that deceive us with their vain show, they shall have their praise in the political assembly and in the common renown among men; but before the heavenly judgment they shall be of no value to acquire merit (in Schneewind 1998, p. 36).

God’s grace in such statements appears unrelated to person’s capacity as agents. God providentially can use these virtues in order to bring about his will, but the exercise of human virtue is without any true spiritual value. This is all to say that a discernible *tendency* to dichotomize between God’s power and humans’ is evident and is in large part responsible for the idea that virtue is incompatible with Christianity.¹³

include the notion of power for obedient life, it is typically understood as a “supernatural” power that irresistibly reforms human nature” (Maddox 1990, p. 37).

¹³ As will be seen in Chapter nine, EO has a “synergistic” view between God’s power and humans even in redemption itself.

But it is not just the virtues that came under attack in separating God's grace from human nature, but freedom itself. Virtue was in many respects but a casualty of the larger battle. Notice the following by Luther, the fountainhead of the Reformation:

I misspoke when I said that free will before grace exists in name only; rather I should have simply said: "free will is a fiction among real things, a name with no reality." For no one has it within his control to intend anything, good or evil (in Gillespie 2008, p. 145).

The role of human agency was denied by Luther in such a strong way that some argue he represented a "clear break with the previous Christian tradition (Gillespie 2008, p. 155).¹⁴ Such a position puts meaningful notions of human responsibility in peril.

However, even where agency was not entirely rejected, there is another way which God's sovereignty or power is conceived to render any cultivation or structuring of human powers (i.e. virtues) as an opposing factor to grace, and is seen with Karl Barth in his "Divine Command Theory". For Barth, human nature is not merely a passive instrument, but nonetheless "Barth reflects the Protestant suspicion ... to the subject of virtue" (Outka 1977, p. 233). Barth indeed moves a step towards a position of "cooperation" between God's freedom and humans'; it is, however, but a very small step and cannot embrace the virtues. This is because Divine Sovereignty is perceived to be infringed upon unless "there is a final sense in which it is God who commands *in the present moment*". God's grace must be *spontaneous*, ever new, and there is no question of humans "appropriating grace" or God's love and growing in "character" or habit formation or stable dispositions or preferences—the virtues.¹⁵ Grace, to be grace, must be experienced as "new every

¹⁴ Luther also argued that the will was placed between God and Satan, "between the two like a beast of burden" and, "nor can it choose to run to either of the two riders". Luther believed, apparently mistakenly, that this image of the will being ridden by *either* God or Satan to be from Augustine when it has been traced back by scholars to Origen and the Manicheans (Gillespie 2008, p. 154).

¹⁵ This explains why "character development" literature, which is deeply related to the virtue tradition, has not been widely accepted by Protestants and on the other hand Catholics have been involved in and even lead this domain (Lickona 1991). Protestant theologian Emil Brunner is cited as one of the few Protestants who did not reject the virtues (Outka 1977, p. 149). Brunner argued early on (German publication 1932) for

morning”.¹⁶ This is Barth’s “Divine Command theory” that the “Proclamation of the Word” opens:

It [the Proclamation of the Word] commands not only how man is to think and act here and now, but also quite specifically what is to take place inwardly in his mind and thoughts and outwardly in what he does or refrains from doing. It leaves nothing to human choice or preference. It thus requires no interpretation to come into force. To the last and smallest detail it is self-interpreted (Barth, *Dogmatics III/4:11-12* (in Outka 1977, p. 230)).

This leaving “nothing to human choice or preference” excludes the very possibility of virtues in that virtues (historically understood) involve the conscious effort to structure human agency. Yet there is a tension between this and the existence and operation of *creational* structures that are more stable and give (to use Barth’s terminology) “constancy to God’s command”. These creational structures have value, whether under the label of Barthian “spheres”, the “orders” of Brunner, or the “mandates” in Bonhoeffer. Outka views this tension between the spontaneity of grace and the stability of creational structures as a fundamental inconsistency in the system of the dialectical theologians (Outka 1977, p. 231). The main point though is that this Divine-Command approach is at odds with a virtue approach that values human action and the development of stable dispositions and patterns of freedom—and these as dimensions of grace. As will be seen below, this critique of Barth is not idiosyncratic as the most important Protestant virtue theorist, Stanley Hauerwas, argues similarly.

On this basis it can be argued that one plausible reason for the *conceptual* disconnect between Christian faith and human development concerns the role of freedom or agency—and the virtues imply a valuable human agent. Development theory and practice

“what Aristotle and the Catholic moralists mean when they speak of virtue” (Brunner 1947, p. 168). But several years later (German publication 1937) Brunner dedicates an entire chapter to the notion that “character development” is not a theological category; “It describes simply the forms in which men are different from one another, not as created beings but as sinful beings” (Brunner 1939, p. 317).

¹⁶ Outka helpfully describes this “Divine Command Theory” as “a kind of theological contextualism in which the agent must allow God to specify how love is to be applied in very particular situations” (Outka 1977, p. 255).

presuppose *some* effective level of human agency. While from any Christian perspective Amartya Sen exaggerates the role of human agency in his capability approach, one still might want to argue that human action/agency has *some* role in bringing about the good within human lives. In other words, one need not go as far as Sen who defines development *as* expanse of freedoms, but nonetheless an honest rendering of the human condition must give *some* effective (even if incomplete) role to human agency—and the virtues demand this.

Generalizations are hazardous for a movement as complex and diverse as Protestantism and without doubt Protestantism has made great contributions to human development despite its difficulty with the virtues. The great statesman and theologian Abraham Kuyper points to Calvinism's activism (Kuyper 2002) which is linked to the "inner-worldly asceticism" described by Max Weber that proved so transformative (Weber 1958, p. 170-171). Nicholas Wolterstorff articulates a profound theology of *shalom*, *shalom* being the working out of well-being and delight in all dimensions of existence (Wolterstorff 1980; 1983). Walter Rauschenbusch spearheaded the social gospel that awakened Protestants to the influence of, and thus work to transform, social structures (Rauschenbusch 1916; Dillenberger and Welch 1998, p. 231).¹⁷ Recent Protestant theologians have analyzed the structural injustices of capitalism and offer powerful theological and economically informed critiques (Goudzwaard 1975; 1975; Storkey 1979; Daly and Jr. 1990; Goudzwaard and Lange 1995; Hay 2004). There is also evidence of a movement towards "integral [holistic] mission" in Evangelicalism (expressed in the Lausanne covenant and organizations like World Vision and Tearfund) that lessens the gap between evangelistic and justice concerns, and suggests a more nuanced engagement with

¹⁷ John Wesley is known to have prioritized the Eastern Fathers over the Western and "it was primarily through Chrysostom that Wesley came to his distinctive assessment of the Christian life as 'faith filled with the energy of love.'" (Maddox 1990, p. 31).

the world (Myers 1999a; 1999b; Bonk 2011).¹⁸ Perhaps most fundamentally, the Protestant Reformation was critical for one of Modernity's achievements, what Charles Taylor calls the "affirmation of ordinary life"—"those aspects of human life concerned with production and reproduction, that is, labour, the making of the things needed for life, and our life as a sexual being, including marriage and the family" (Taylor 1989, p. 211). There can be little doubt that the lessening of social hierarchies and the corresponding dignifying of labour in the Reformation meant a broad increase in the "space" and dynamics for the exercise of human agency, even if its theological value was often denied. But this denial is the point in question. The contention here is *not* that Protestant theology is unconcerned with or has not made great contributions to human development.¹⁹ But rather the question concerns the fact that it is not "Christianity in general" that rejects the virtues as is often asserted, but rather only one of its three major branches.

Protestantism is, however, a highly diverse tradition and it would be surprising if there were no theologians who have "protested" and embraced the virtues. If the virtue approach can indeed serve as a viable bridge between religious faith and human development as is being suggested, it becomes imperative now to investigate perhaps the most significant exception to the rule: Stanley Hauerwas.

7.3 A Protestant Retrieval: Stanley Hauerwas

If future historians of theology look back on the twentieth century and discern a movement of the Protestant flock toward the field of the virtue ethics, Stanley Hauerwas will have

¹⁸ However, this positive engagement with the world may require rethinking stark approaches toward human depravity (and the related denial of natural law), as a Catholic theologian reviewing the Lausanne process attested (Schreiter 2011).

¹⁹ See (Prevette 2012) for a study of this problem in terms of evangelical NGO's in Romania whose theological categories inhibit their ability to adequately describe and include their very own noble social work activities.

been its bellwether. The account here will note Hauerwas' reasons for embracing the virtues (which confirm the the critique especially of Barth provided above) and then analyze his approach in terms of its capacity to integrate with human development concerns.

Stanley Hauerwas turned to the virtue tradition because he believed that the Divine Command Theory (DCT), the "principal metaphor of Protestantism", was patently inadequate (Hauerwas 1975).²⁰ The DCT approach to ethics denies any significance to the actual shape of a person's life and "tends to be inherently occasionalistic with a correlative understanding of the self that is passive and atomistic" (in Black 2000, p. 246).²¹ Within this (Barthian) DCT framework, notions of Christian growth, context, or even the importance of community in moral formation were marginalized; any suggestion of "moral development" was seen as a form of "works righteousness".²² Because of these problems, Protestants had no conceptual tools or vocabulary to describe their convictions about Christian growth. Hauerwas countered this and argued that the "language of virtue and character is especially fruitful in providing moral expressions appropriate to Christian convictions" (Hauerwas 1981, p. 132) and laboured to re-articulate the virtues for Protestant thought.

In 2001 Time magazine named Hauerwas "America's Best theologian", to which he responded, "Best is not a theological category" (Brierley 2011). This riposte illustrates

²⁰ Hauerwas turned to Aristotle and Aquinas not only because of the theological problems in Divine Command theory, but also because he found *contemporary* moral theory to be unacceptable for similar reasons mentioned by Nussbaum in the previous chapter (the "snapshot" view of ethical decision-making).

²¹ Hauerwas criticises Karl Barth directly here, quoting a stark passage of his: "Our sanctification is God's work, not our own. It is very necessary, therefore, that there should be an encounter, the confrontation of our existence with the command of God" (in Hauerwas and Pinches 1997, p. 115). It should be kept in mind, and why Barth is so radical, that Protestants have tended to assert that *justification* (which is the exclusive domain of salvation proper) is entirely God's work, while *sanctification* is at least partly the work of the believer.

²² Oliver O'Donovan is an important Protestant Evangelical theologian who also rejects Divine Command Theories (O'Donovan 1994).

perfectly Hauerwas' "communitarian" approach: the Church is a distinctive *polis* constituted by its fidelity, as a community of expectations and practices, to the narrative revealed in Scripture. This serves as a *counter*-story to the world's way of doing politics.

Hauerwas' radicalism and commitment to the Christian story, his narrative approach to scripture and ethics, his bombastic style, the wide set of authors he draws from—from Bernard Williams, Stanley Fish, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Mary Midgley, and especially Aristotle (he once wrote "I am better acquainted with the text of the Nichomachean Ethics than I am of the New Testament" (Hauerwas 1994, p. 22))—have made him an intriguing author. He is also influenced by the pacifism of the Mennonite, John Howard Yoder. Hauerwas offers many helpful criticisms of Enlightenment liberalism and its over-identification of the human good with freedom, and especially negative freedoms. One of his principal concerns is identical to this thesis and is to attack "the liberal assumption that a just polity is possible without the people being just" (Hauerwas 1981, p. 73). Also in fundamental agreement with the present approach is Hauerwas' insistence that "ethics depends on vital communities sufficient to produce well-lived lives" (Hauerwas 1983, p. 15). Hauerwas defends (in twenty-five books and hundreds of articles) an approach, where, according to Rowan Williams, the "context of all Christian reflection is the Church and its governing *narratives*" (Williams 2006, p.220). Hauerwas is deeply influenced by George Lindbeck and his post-liberal "cultural-linguistic" approach to doctrine.²³ It is primarily concerning this strongly narrative, communitarian, approach that questions have been raised.

²³ A few select sentences from Lindbeck are enough to show the parallels with the Hauerwasian position to be developed. Doctrine is "communally authoritative rules of discourse, attitude and action" (p.18). To be religious, in the postliberal perspective is to "interiorize a set of skills [developed by the community through] practice and training" (p. 35). And this one is most significant: all religious traditions are understood to be "radically ... distinct ways of experiencing and being oriented toward self, neighbour, and cosmos" (Lindbeck 1984, p. 40). Each "language game" (Wittgenstein's term) is largely incommensurable with others.

It is important to note that a shift occurred between Hauerwas' earlier work and his later, a shift that has aroused concerns that are not unrelated to the analysis provided in this thesis. His earlier work emphasized the dynamics of character development, the inherently social dimensions of personhood and this as the foundation for human agency, and these features inspired by a narrative vision of the moral life that can depict a life of "wholeness and integrity" (Black 2000, p. 206). His early work was concerned with making the person, in all her particularity, relationality, and history, the subject of moral deliberation. This "early" approach, however, was increasingly eclipsed by what became an almost singular focus on the narrative construction of moral virtue (Outka 1980). For Hauerwas, the Christian narrative constitutes *distinctive* communities of shared commitments and also a *distinctive* notion of moral personhood which is dissimilar from that of the world (especially liberalism).²⁴ Within such an approach, "we learn that our first moral question must be Of [sic] what history am I a part and how can I best understand it?" (Hauerwas 1981, p. 100), or, "everything has to do with what story we are in. This is so because stories form worlds" (Hauerwas and Pinches 1997, p. 125).²⁵ Hauerwas agrees with Augustine who "argued so adamantly that pagan [natural] virtue is nothing less than sin" (Hauerwas and Pinches 1997, p. 27). Hauerwas thus insists on a radical discontinuity between authentic Christian virtues and those of general humanity. Hauerwas admits that such an approach abandons the very "attempt to develop a 'universal' ethic" and that this "involves a certain kind of relativism" but he hopes not a "vicious one" (Hauerwas 1981, p. 101).

²⁴ Hauerwas increasingly employed imagery of Christians as "aliens", living on a "colony" and at war with, and being attacked by, a hostile world. Writing about the good of fidelity in marriage, he notes: "fidelity in marriage is a discipline necessary to sustain us in the struggle with the enemy" (Hauerwas and Willimon 1996, p. 37). These virtues are necessary "to resist the world that would destroy us". Virtue language was increasingly described in martial imagery.

²⁵ Hauerwas also argues though that the distinctive *practices* of the Christian community give rise to a distinctive reading of the Biblical text; *praxis* influences hermeneutics. Hauerwas emphasizes, correctly, that one can only properly read the text when one is following the example of Christ. There are parallels with Orthodoxy here that will be developed later.

Such an approach raises problems that have not gone uncriticized. His latter works approached a narrative determinism and appeared to undermine human freedom. Hauerwas' concern "is no longer on the self who does the choosing but on the story which gives directions to choice" (Bondi 1984, p. 203). But this may really be a minor problem because it is indeed the point of the Christian story to "alter the possibilities of action" (Williams 2006, p. 220). Patricia Jung, a sympathetic critic, notes however a deeper problem related to the (third Trinitarian) category of nature: the "one sided intellectualistic" nature of this narrative approach fails to provide an account of the emotions and how these involve "the embodied nature of the moral agent" (Jung 1983).

Faced with such criticisms, Hauerwas sought to include a better account of emotions in his theory, but did so in ways that *further* emphasized the narrative's singularly constitutive role for moral virtues and their emotional counterparts.²⁶ One can see this neglect of "embodied nature" when Hauerwas aligns himself with the "old" (strongly narrative) view of Alisdair MacIntyre discussed earlier. "MacIntyre argues not only that the virtues are tradition-specific but so also are the desires" (Hauerwas and Pinches 1997, p. 200). This is why for Hauerwas it is important to "distinguish genuinely Christian notions of growth in the moral life" from the view that our moral development "unfolds from what is in us naturally as potential". In a similar vein, the virtues are not the "result of a teleology intrinsic to human nature" and thus Christian virtue "cannot be generic" (Hauerwas and Pinches 1997).²⁷ Unsurprisingly perhaps, the feature of human nature that appears

²⁶ Roberts argues, in terms of the decline of interest in nature as a theological category in Protestantism, that "[t]he turn to the subject, initiated by Martin Luther [and Schleiermacher] ... loosen[ed] the hold of theological explanation on the 'outer' physical world" (Roberts 2004, p. 193; 2005). This turn to subjectivity includes a neglect of the inner physical/biological world as well, the concrete human essence.

²⁷ This dominating focus on narrative can lead to "research programs" within scripture that select certain claims about human existence, such as its fallen nature or depravity, for confirmation (Black 2000, p. 106). This is the leading aspect of Hauerwas' understanding of human nature, which in turn justifies an understanding of salvation primarily as forgiveness from sins, which in turn gives rise to a focus on forgiveness as the "hub of the Christian virtues" (Hauerwas and Pinches 1997, p. 121).

noteworthy from a theological point of view for Hauerwas is its sinfulness.²⁸ Hauerwas calls the “reality of this world” the “world of sin” (Hauerwas and Pinches 1997, p. 128).

Hauerwas clearly overstates the role of distinctive communitarian narratives. Noted already in the last chapter (and why he was included there) is that MacIntyre, against his own former views (which Hauerwas relies heavily upon) began to see the need to root virtues more in embodied nature, that is, in “facts about animality, disability and vulnerability” (MacIntyre 1999, p. xii). It is not necessary to recount the details here, but there is a significant revolution in the human sciences in the twentieth century that makes Hauerwas’ position all the more problematic. There is compelling evidence, arising from fields such as neuroscience and child development, showing that the moral life arises out of given cognitive structures and age-specific developmental features. Two brief examples will be given. First is the celebrated finding that “mirror neurons” in the brain allows the agent to sympathetically experience others’ states. This biological capacity allows persons to experience the mind-states of others not through conceptual or narrative reasoning, but through direct simulation (Rifkin 2009, p. 83). Humans literally feel the pain of others. Second, child psychologists have discovered that children as young as three years have an innate or ontogenetic sense of morality and can distinguish between personal, conventional, and true morality. (There is also evidence for a minimal sense of right and wrong as early as three months (Hamlin, Wynn et al. 2007)). Children do not learn to be moral primarily by being “taught” that hitting is wrong; they learn this “somatically” through engaging in social and embodied experience. Empathy is an underdeveloped instinct, but it is already there as tendency and is developed directly through empathetic, embodied, experiences.

²⁸ This might be considered an overstatement considering Hauerwas’ emphasis on the Aristotelian “social nature”. However, Hauerwas saw the social goods of the secular *polis* as fundamentally distorted and oriented towards war. See footnote below.

It is hard to know whether such findings about “nature’s norms” can be integrated with Hauerwas’ emphasis on the Christian narrative and the radical distinctiveness of the Christian community. Seeing Christian love as built upon an already empathic nature has often been a threat to theology, especially Protestantism that has tended to separate grace and nature (Burns 2006), although there are some promising discussions (Post, Underwood et al. 2002). Orthodoxy has always been comfortable with and even would expect to see this altruism or empathy in nature believing that all dimensions of nature participate in the Trinitarian social reality. Theological narratives help interpret and shape these experiences, but it does not create the genuinely moral and Christian nature of human experience *ex nihilo*. Nature is already “graced” in many respects.

This is not to reject the idea that some narratives are more “truthful” than others and neither is it to reject the idea that narrative can open up important possibilities for choice and decisively add to and even correct human experience. Hauerwas’ insistence that to imitate Christ is to respond to evil with good, with forgiveness and non-violence, is indeed attractive and has been a distinctive Christian contribution to the shape of the virtues. But this emphasis need not be seen in an *a priori* opposition to or separated from natural law or general accounts of human flourishing.²⁹ Indeed, narrative interpretations of moral development need not be viewed at odds with universally held moral norms, any more than history, or the developmental laws of biology, are at odds with the “timeless” laws of physics.³⁰ There are different levels of analysis involved and the psychologically astute narratives of Jane Austin or Iris Murdoch can attest to universal principles that require

²⁹ One author writing contra Hauerwas in relation to natural law notes: “the story of Jesus is capable of producing behaviour that an observer can recognize as moral but which has not previously been identified as such by any rule” (Black 2000, p. 217). Hannah Arendt pointed out that it was Jesus of Nazareth who first revealed to humankind the importance of forgiveness in social relationships (Arendt 1998). This is a specific example of how narrative, or revelation, can reveal a universal truth that then becomes widely accepted.

³⁰ Paul Ricoeur is exceptionally helpful here and shows how narratives, even the Biblical one, participate in a larger *logos* revealed by narratology (the principle of continuity), but also that specific narratives provide intensifications of specific themes. This is to say that revelation can shape humanity’s general understanding of human experiences or the virtues. This will be developed more fully in chapter nine.

maturation in concrete relationships, resolutions of conflict, and thus the narrative factor of *time*. And there are other genres besides narrative in Scripture with a different relation to time: commands, maxims, wisdom sayings.³¹

The problem with Hauerwas' approach is not his insistence on narrative, even less his insistence on community and the inadequacies of liberal freedoms. Rather the difficulty is his insistence on the *absolute* distinctiveness of the Christian virtues and the *sinful* nature of natural virtues and what this overall approach means in terms of dialogue with the world and its needs.³² With this insistence, Hauerwas displays only a superficial alliance with Aquinas, whom he often references (O'Meara 1997, p. 255).³³ Catholicism posits natural virtues and supernatural and a correspondence of sorts (this will be dealt with below), and this in turn creates the basis for a positive dialogue with society through natural law. This correspondence provides the basis for what David Hollenbach called the virtue of "intellectual solidarity" where "there is a truth about the human good that must be pursued and that makes a claim on the minds and hearts of all persons" (Hollenbach-S.J. 2002, p. 157). Hauerwas rejects human rights discourse and especially the moral concerns of liberalism, even though liberalism is arguably a historical carrier of Christian values concerning the dignity of the individual (Stackhouse 1981). And despite the evident problems of political liberalism, abandoning it (in favour of?) as a basis for ordering society can pose even greater problems (Insole 2004).

³¹ Some have complained of Hauerwas' selective choice of genres in the scriptures (Stackhouse 1997).

³² Rowan Williams wisely notes in the context of discussing Hauerwas and Milbank: "Story and community can in some circumstances become ... divorced from hard questions about just and sustainable relationships between persons and within the social order" (Williams 2006, p. 221).

³³ Hauerwas notes that Aquinas produced "the most satisfactory version of morality we have had so far", but then notes that "Christianity is not a continuation of the Greek understanding of the virtues, but rather the inauguration of a new tradition that sets the virtues within an entirely different *telos* in community" (Hauerwas and Pinches 1997, pp. 62-63). Hauerwas, borrowing from Milbank, presents the classical virtues much too simplistically as a "pre-Christian world of war" (Hauerwas and Pinches 1997, p. 67), failing to note that the rise of the later Socratic, Platonic, and even Aristotelian approaches can be seen as softening the warrior ethic of Homer.

This is a perfect time to note from a different angle that the early church did not see itself (for the most part) as a contradiction of classical conceptions, but their extension and completion. Jose Casanova quotes Peter Brown, arguably the greatest historian of Late Antiquity (the period from 150-750) in this vein:

While early Christianity may have made almost no innovation in moral matters, nonetheless it played a crucial historical role by "democratizing" the philosophers' upper-class culture and by putting into practice "what pagan and Jewish moralists had already begun to preach" (Brown 1987, p. 260; Casanova 1994, p. 232).

As another historian attested, "What Athens knew the Christians practiced" (Laeuchli 1967, p. 36).³⁴ However, there *is* something genuinely new if moral *practice*, success in bringing about generally recognized desired social change, is valued as a significant achievement above mere moral theorizing. Here Hauerwas is right in his insistence that what is required is a community of virtuous agents following Christ's example (Hauerwas 2001); he just overstates the case for the discontinuity of the Christian virtues with those of wider humanity. Perhaps a fuller appreciation of the "shared nature" dimension of Trinitarian anthropology can help Hauerwas' approach link with human development concerns. However, this question of Christianity's unique contribution to human experience cannot be ignored and will be picked up in chapter nine. With this problematic in mind, the account turns now to Catholicism, a tradition that has been much less pessimistic about the "pagan" virtues.

7.4 Catholicism

This section will describe Catholic virtues primarily to provide a basis of comparison with EO, but also to note the Catholic contribution to development. To outline the Catholic

³⁴ The renowned Roman pagan physician and philosopher Galen (129-200 AD) noted that the Christians "number individuals who, in self-discipline and self control in matters of food and drink, and in their keen pursuit of justice, have attained a pitch not inferior to that of the genuine philosophers", and he thought it significant to mention that these "include not only men but women" (Stevenson 1987, p. 137).

position, it is necessary to note the separation of the natural and supernatural virtues, and revisit one of the aforementioned Aristotelian themes, namely the privileging of contemplative reason over practical reason. The account will demonstrate just how influential this priority of the contemplative over the practical has been by a brief exploration of neo-scholasticism and the deep changes in theology in the light of Vatican II. The account will illustrate these themes primarily from an analysis of Jacques Maritain, a Catholic philosopher and activist influential on human rights in the 20th century. Maritain is fascinating because he champions both the “old” neo-scholastic approach that was all but repudiated in Vatican II, but he was also an inspiration for the new direction of social concerns so evident in the encyclicals. Three of these that bear directly on human development will be briefly analyzed.

7.4.1 Vatican II and the decline of neo-scholasticism

The defining event in twentieth-century Roman Catholic theology was the Second Vatican Council (Kerr 2007, p. 203). Pope John XIII wanted to throw “open the window of the church and let in some fresh air” (Sullivan 2002, p. 17). Changes were set in motion, many of which could have never been predicted (Curran 2008, p. 231).³⁵ Just how much continuity or discontinuity this represented with the past is subject to much debate, and even harder to determine its effect on the subject at hand, the virtues, as will be seen. But a defining feature of Vatican II was developing alternatives to neo-scholasticism. “There is no doubt that the outstanding event in the Catholic theology of our century is the surmounting of neo-scholasticism” (Kasper 1989, p. 1), and this impacted Catholicism’s relationship with development concerns.

³⁵ The precedent for this was Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical *Rerum novarum* that stunned the capitalist and Catholic worlds and is called the Magna Carta of Catholic social teaching (Holland 2003, p. 304). Among other things, it affirmed the worker amidst the ravages of industrialization, advocated a just wage, and the right to form labor unions.

Catherine Lacugna notes that pre Vatican II theology (neo-scholasticism) was “widely criticized as unhistorical, ill-equipped to deal with the modern turn to the subject, out of touch with modern science, and overly focused on lifeless concepts as opposed to experience” (in Rahner 1998, p. viii). Scholasticism was focused on the sphere of the invariable, the “universal”, and not with history and experience which are the realm of the variable, the realm of action and change. All of this was considered to be founded securely on the teaching of the Angelic Doctor, Thomas Aquinas. Garrigou-Lagrange was considered the model Thomist and his contention was that “action, practice, experience, can never be the first criterion of what is true”; what is true is based on the necessary and *unchanging* laws of being (Kerr 2007, pp. 12-16). Focusing on human experience, *praxis*, progress, or historical development of doctrine was the slippery slope to atheistic modernism. Catholic clerics from 1910 until 1967 were forced to sign “The Anti-Modernist Oath”.

In a surprise for theology perhaps as great as the fall of Communism was for politics, the seemingly impenetrable scholastic edifice was all but dismantled in Vatican II—and for somewhat similar reasons! Both focused almost exclusively on the necessary structures of being and neglected human agency. Twentieth-century Catholic theology became the story of surmounting neo-scholasticism and developing alternative theological visions.³⁶ Names such as Yves Congar, Edward Schillebeeckx, Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner, Bernard Lonergan, Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Hans Küng, Karol Wojtyla, Joseph Ratzinger, and Jacques Maritain³⁷ all played decisive roles. Much of this work involved new interpretations of Aquinas. At the centre of the debate was the role of the relationship

³⁶ It is also the different story of a gradual rapprochement between Rome and Orthodoxy, at an official level. In January 1964, the first face to face meeting took place between a Pope and an Ecumenical Patriarch since 1438/9. The anathemas of 1054 were mutually revoked. Kallistos Ware notes that “it is the Roman Catholics with whom we have by far the more in common” (Ware 1998, pp. 314-15).

³⁷ Vatican II made policy many of the proposals offered by Maritain thirty years previous in *Integral Humanism* (Maritain 1973; Doering 1987, p. 93).

between nature and supernature. Cajetan (1469 – 1534), an early interpreter of Aquinas, was blamed for setting up two separate realms, nature and supernature as two different destinies for humans. This distinction (also affirmed by Suárez (1548-1617)), according to de Lubac, was the origin of the idea of human autonomy (i.e. a freedom that need make no reference to God) that led logically to atheism and secularism. Both Lubac and Balthasar claimed that their own Catholicism was the womb within which secularism was birthed (Kerr 2007, p. 74)!³⁸ Reinterpretations of Aquinas were offered, or not even bothered with; one was no longer *required* to frame theology in terms of Aquinas. Balthasar reworked the entire tradition, largely from Patristic sources and profound encounters with Karl Barth. Balthasar also wrote a seminal work on Maximus the Confessor and these Eastern influences are incorporated into his thinking (Balthasar 2003).³⁹

There can be no hope of doing justice to the issues involved here, especially interpreting Aquinas and the relation of grace to nature, about which even experts disagree (O'Meara 1997). However, even though neo-scholasticism lost its mandatory basis, this does not mean its influence has vanished, and that there are not losses. Scholasticism served as the basis for Catholicism's profound natural law treatment and a basis for human dignity, as will be seen in Jacques Maritain. Indeed, the very separation of nature and grace was construed to give nature an autonomy, dignity, and coherence of its own—and provided the basis for moral collaboration not resting on controversial theological assumptions. But as was seen above with Hauerwas, a turn to narrative, or “salvation-history” which Catholicism experienced post Vatican II (Ratzinger 1987) can present problems for natural law and thus dialoguing with those outside of one's faith tradition. Is there hope of

³⁸ Balthasar argued that Suárez, not Descartes, “laid the foundation for the metaphysics of modernity” (Kerr 2007, p. 125).

³⁹ Balthasar was considered to be the most cultivated person of his era, according to his mentor, de Lubac (Murphy 2008, p. 29). He was also reckoned the greatest Catholic theologian of the twentieth century (Kerr 2007, p. 121). His work on Maximus was pioneering.

keeping the strengths of a natural law approach simultaneously with the focus on human action, experience, community, and salvation history? Before examining how this important question is being addressed, a brief analysis of the Catholic virtues is in order, virtues that still bear within them the marks of the scholastic distinctions.

7.4.2 Virtues in Catholic Theology

That Christianity is often considered incompatible with the virtue tradition is all the more ironic as the revival of virtue ethics in modern philosophy is widely attributed to Elizabeth Anscombe (Anscombe 1958), a theorist within the Catholic tradition. This is not even to mention the influence of other Catholics such as Alisdair MacIntyre (treated in the last chapter because of his shift to shared nature) and more recently Linda Zagzebski (Zagzebski 1996). Anscombe is significant because she persuasively argued that most modern moral philosophy is incoherent because it rests on an inherited notion of “obedience to a Moral Law” that presupposed the existence of a Divine lawgiver, but who is now rejected (Rachels 1998, p. 670). This argument helped catalyze a shift to the virtue tradition in philosophical circles. However, even prior to this, there were articulations of the virtue tradition within Catholicism since at least the 1860’s (and consistently from 1560-1860) so talk of a “discovery” can, from one perspective, seem odd (O’Meara 1997, p. 255).

In approaching the virtues in Catholicism, one immediately discerns language strikingly close to Aristotle. The *Catholic Catechism* of 1993 (completed under Cardinal Ratzinger) writes:

Human virtues are firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections of intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith. They make possible ease, self-mastery, and joy in leading a morally good life. The virtuous man is he who freely practices the good. The moral virtues are acquired by

human effort. They are the fruit and seed of morally good acts; they dispose all the powers of the human being for communion with divine love.

Visible here is the positive role of human effort, freedom, reason, and joy in the pursuit of the good. And the Catechism in this context quotes the eastern Father Gregory of Nyssa stating that “the goal of the virtuous life is to enable us to become like God” (Paul-II 1993).⁴⁰

The Catechism goes on to delineate the traditional seven virtues; the first four are the cardinal or “natural” virtues, and the latter three are the “theological” ones.⁴¹ The natural virtues, also called the pagan virtues, are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance—borrowed straight from the classical tradition. The theological virtues, also called the *supernatural* virtues, are, of course, faith, hope, and love—borrowed from Paul’s eulogy on love, 1 Corinthians 13. Love of God is the summit of the entire sphere of the *practical* (but within the category of supernatural) virtues, that for which everything else tends and through which each virtue finds its orientation and completion. (A table will be given shortly to help the reader keep track of these distinctions.) Evident here is that in Catholicism grace, or supernatural virtue, complements and completes human nature—the natural virtues—thus a *synergy* of sorts is in operation. This is in some respects similar to EO in that a more positive role is given to human nature and for human effort, but differences emerge as well. For example, the distinction between “human” (natural) and “theological” (supernatural) virtues is Catholic and is not employed by EO. Behind these distinctions (and one more important one below) is a particular relationship to Aristotle.

⁴⁰ Cited in the Catechism: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a7.htm

⁴¹ Peter Lombard first linked the three theological virtues with the four cardinal ones; later, Thomas Aquinas’s teacher, Albert of Cologne, joined a morality of virtues to a theology of grace (O’Meara 1997, p. 263).

Thomism, as is well known, is the bold and brilliant attempt to synthesize the entire Greek classical tradition, but pre-eminently Aristotle, with Christian revelation.⁴² For Aquinas (unlike Aristotle), there are *two* sources of truth, that of the natural and that of the supernatural, but concerning the former, the natural realm or what is often called “philosophy”, Aristotle was regarded as the leading light. There is some overlap in these domains of philosophy and theology, of nature and supernature (e.g. that God “is” as First Cause), but there are truths that the supernatural alone can reveal (e.g. that God is Trinity). There are also truths that philosophical reflection on common experience can give that Revelation does not, such as that the “sentient faculty never exists without the nutritive” (Albert, Denise et al. 1984, p. 108).⁴³ Still, Aquinas believes that Aristotle (representing natural or philosophical reflection) gave the correct basic outline about human well-being and the natural virtues.

Aristotle’s version is of course incomplete and requires completion from supernatural revelation. This is important because this distinction between *philosophy* and *theology* (or natural and supernatural revelation) “is the foundation of the distinction between the natural and the supernatural virtues” (Coplestone-S.J. 1985, p. 316). The human virtues operate in the realm of natural reason and effort (e.g. agency, solidarity, structures); the theological virtues are *given* by God and are entirely a gift of grace “beyond the natural capacity of human beings” (Rahner 1998, p. 1). There is a latent disposition in human nature for the theological virtues, but this is activated only by divine grace, not human agency. Though the theological virtues complete, in a way the natural ones, they are quite different. All of this is confirmed by Aquinas’ own description: these virtues are called

⁴² One cannot speak of “Thomism” or “neo-Thomism” as though it might be a single theology or school. From universities, or more frequently from religious orders, came a variety of interpretations of Aquinas (O’Meara 1997, p. 270).

⁴³ Likewise there are natural virtues that were hidden to Aristotle that reflection on humanity’s true end discovered, such as the *virtue* of religion: “that by which men give God his honour and due not merely as final Cause, but Creator and exercising Providence” (Coplestone-S.J. 1985, p. 410). This is an example of what theology can bring to philosophy, the latter being understood as striving towards an ever more adequate characterization of the human condition.

theological “first, because their object is God, inasmuch as they direct us rightly to God; secondly, because they are infused in us by God alone; thirdly, because these virtues are not made known to us, save by divine revelation” (in Jones 1969, p. 269).

But the ultimate end of *both* of these domains for Aquinas—the natural and the supernatural—is the attainment of *contemplative* or theoretical wisdom, not practical wisdom.⁴⁴ The end of nature’s powers (the natural virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance) is ultimately not practical wisdom but the truth of supratemporal universals, a fact which Aristotle asserted from the realm of philosophy under the name *episteme*. The end of the *supernatural* power (the supernatural virtues: faith, hope, and love) is *similarly* related to contemplative reason in the “vision of God” (or “Beatific vision”), which is an intellectual apprehension of God’s unchanging *esse*, His essence intuited as an intellectual act. Humans are to discern the “species intelligibles”, the pure abstract truths and ideas that characterize Goodness as such (God), and no particular instantiation of it (Kirk 1931, p. 548). Aquinas demonstrated that knowing God (God’s unchanging essence) is a more proper characterization of the *telos* of human life than loving God, which clearly is the effect of (or at least remarkably similar to) the Aristotelian privileging of contemplative reason over practical. While Aquinas does make some concession for the unlearned, and did much to enhance regard for the corporeal character

⁴⁴ Aquinas writes:

For perfect contemplation requires that the body should be disencumbered, and to this effect are directed all the products of art that are necessary for life. Moreover, it requires freedom from the disturbances caused by the passions, which is achieved by means of the moral virtues and of prudence; and freedom from external disturbance, to which the whole governance of the civil life is directed. So that, if we consider the matter rightly, we shall see that all human occupations appear to serve those who contemplate the truth ... and since happiness must consist in operation of the intellect in relation to the most noble intelligible objects ... It is therefore evident ... that man’s ultimate happiness consists solely in the contemplation of God (Albert, Denise et al. 1984, p. 114).

The highest activity in man (operation of the rational intellect), is to be directed in contemplation of not merely scientific universals, but the “most noble intelligible objects”—God or Goodness itself—and thus all of life, including the moral and theological virtues, are ordained to *this* supreme end.

of human existence,⁴⁵ the privileging of the contemplative over the practical, of *theoria* over *praxis*, became the basis for scholasticism.

It must be pointed out how alien this approach is to Eastern Orthodoxy.⁴⁶ Thomism (at least as it is characteristically understood) presents a vision of human happiness (*eudaimonia*) as intellectual participation in the Godhead. One Orthodox writer comments:

Aquinas' teaching on the beatific vision exhibits with particular clarity the differences separating him from the eastern tradition. The most immediately obvious is that, whereas for the East God [God's essence or nature] is beyond knowing, Aquinas regards him as the highest intelligible object. Aquinas is aware of this disagreement (Bradshaw 2004, p. 255).

Orthodoxy uncategorically denies this possibility. Gregory of Nyssa affirms that not even the angels know the essence of God to show that this inability is not a result of sin or weakness but is a result of creaturely existence *per se* (Bradshaw 2004, p. 255). In Orthodoxy, this is a doctrine known as *apophaticism* (shared with other traditions, but differently deployed) and linked with the important essence/energies distinction of Gregory Palamas that will be investigated in the final chapter of this thesis.

7.4.3 Maritain and Catholic Social Teaching

Instead of continued exegesis of Aquinas texts, Jacques Maritain will now be analyzed as he was highly influential in the modern revival of Thomism and provides remarkably clear language concerning what Aquinas' main theses are taken to mean. Pope John Paul II hailed Maritain as an interpreter of Aquinas (Kerr 2007, p. 168).

⁴⁵ "Saint Thomas ... is perhaps the first Christian philosopher to take the corporeal character of human existence calmly" (Kirk 1931, p. 384). Bodily and emotional goods (and perhaps not the highest in this scheme) are still genuinely good aspects of human existence.

⁴⁶ The separation of grace and nature, while "somewhat alien", is perhaps intelligible from an Orthodox perspective inasmuch as grace and nature cannot be entirely reducible to each other.

Maritain writes that the “superiority of the speculative [or contemplative] over the practical intellect constitutes an essential thesis of Thomism” (Maritain 1966, p. 24), thus confirming the main contention in this section.⁴⁷ As mentioned, the object of the practical intellect is a good to be done or accomplished, while the good of the speculative or contemplative is related to the Good itself, and this does not admit of degrees, change, or improvement. Because of the superiority of the speculative over the practical intellect, humanity’s resemblance to God “is less in the practical than in the speculative intellect”, and this likeness or union with God is accomplished by a “personal and solitary act of each one’s intellect” (p.25). Thomism posits that the most superior of all these intellectual acts is the beatific vision and “through the intuition of the divine essence, each blessed soul becomes God, in an intentional way” (p. 87). Note that this is superior to the theological virtues, faith, hope, and love (lying in the sphere of practical reason) for these are something to be realized implying a lack, whereas the beatific vision is related to (here Maritain is quoting Aquinas) “the most perfect beatitude [which] resides in the speculative intellect” (p.26)—where nothing can be lacking. Thus the theological “practical” virtues of faith, hope and love are ordained to and serve the higher good of the contemplative supernatural good of the beatific vision. The following table has been constructed to keep track of these admittedly complex distinctions between natural/supernatural and practical/contemplative:

⁴⁷Thomas Hurka also concurs with this analysis: “the superiority of contemplation or theoretical pursuits over the requirements of practical wisdom—a prioritization that Aquinas and much of theology also inherited” (Hurka 1987, p. 730). Hannah Arendt notices that Aquinas does give a role to the *vita practica*, but its purpose is not an end in itself, but to “exhaust the soul for contemplation” (Arendt 1998, p. 15).

<u>Aristotle's</u> <i>natural</i> virtues—realm of human initiative (these are also Aquinas natural virtues);	<u>Aquinas'</u> <i>supernatural</i> virtues—realm of Divine initiative; (no theological virtues for Aristotle);
Contemplative natural: or supratemporal goods, species, or universals—the unchanging: geometry, etc. Mankind's highest end (without faith);	Contemplative supernatural: the beatific vision: supreme object of theoretical intellect—mankind's highest end according to Revelation;
Practical natural: justice/prudence, ethics, politics, etc. Anything involving action or change; because this admits of change, it is less noble/eternal (“divine”, per Aristotle) than the contemplative.	Practical supernatural: faith/hope/love; primarily related Godward, but also to neighbour love and positive change; because it admits of change, it is less divine than the contemplative.

Source: Own Compilation

Thomistic virtue theory encompasses all of these quadrants and relates them upward and to the right toward the quadrant of the beatific vision, the realm of contemplative, supernatural virtue.

Here is a final extended passage about the towering role of the beatific vision, the highest form of grace in Thomism. Note the “theory of social action” in this approach that Maritain does not shy away from:

Because of its perfect immanence and its high degree of immateriality, contemplative activity is the highest of human activities. It binds man to things divine. It is better than life on the human scale. In supernatural contemplation it takes place according to a mode which is itself superhuman ... received in its entirety from God. To it are ordained the moral virtues ... It is from it [the beatific vision] that the works of the active life must overflow ... And if a man be called to abandon his contemplation to come to the aid of his brothers or to serve the good of the community, the reason for this call is not at all because the good of the practical order is of itself superior to his solitary contemplation. He must accept it only because the order of charity can require that an urgent necessity of a less elevated good, in the circumstances, be given priority (Maritain 1966, p. 26-27).

The tensions within this approach (both in terms of the nature/supernatural division, and the contemplative/active) are not lost on virtue theorists operating within the Thomist tradition. Some theorists such as Jean Porter emphasize less the supernatural virtues and more those natural and philosophical (i.e. Aristotelian) features of human existence (Porter 1990). On the other hand, theologians such as Pinckaers emphasize the theological or supernatural elements, the virtues infused by grace (Pinckaers 1999), as did Hauerwas. In terms of that other distinction within Thomism (and Aristotle), the contemplative over the practical, Linda Zagzebski brings speculative wisdom (*episteme*) closer in line with and *subordinated* to practical wisdom (*phronesis*). Zagzebski's approach here is similar to that of Orthodoxy which is not to subordinate, but rather to superordinate the practical virtues and to ferret out the "theoretical aspect of practical wisdom" (Zagzebski 1996, p. 218). Zagzebski (like Porter above and others including Hollenbach) however does not attempt to integrate the supernatural virtues with the natural ones; neither does Andrew Yuengert who focuses on *phronesis* the "charioteer of the virtues" while relating these to human development, even though he claims to be following Aquinas (Yuengert 2010).⁴⁸ These do not discuss how, as the Catholic Catechism terms it, "The human virtues are rooted in the theological virtues, which adapt man's faculties for participation in the divine nature" (Paul-II 1993).

⁴⁸ At least in her major and celebrated work on virtue epistemology, there are no references to the supernatural/natural virtue distinction (Zagzebski 1996). In a treatment of specifically Catholic environmental virtue ethics (Rourke 2011), the theological virtues are mentioned in passing, but no integration is attempted.

Exactly how are the human virtues rooted in the theological? How do these two domains relate and does this have anything to do with human development? This is a much debated question. However, the argument defended here is that Maritain's theological vision still has enduring value even if certain aspects of his neo-scholastic approach are abandoned. Certain enduring and genuinely valid aspects of his thought, and why he was so influential (and beyond Christianity), can be in danger of being lost in wake of the dismantling of neo-scholasticism post Vatican II.

But before addressing this question of how grace relates to nature, it is important to note Maritain's larger influence. As mentioned, Maritain is perhaps best known as a champion of Thomism, but his legacy is much broader. In virtue of this neo-scholastic framework (or some might say despite it) he birthed influential concepts such as integral humanism that provided a framework for a Catholic theology of development. He (with John Courtney Murray) helped reconstruct the adversarial relationship that Catholicism held with democracy (Maritain 1946; Hollenbach-S.J. 1995, p. 148). Gustavo Gutierrez notes that Maritain was deeply influential in Latin America (Gutierrez 1980, p. 55) and especially in Chile (Doering 1987). He is an important exponent of "personalism" and a defender of the "common good" (both of these will be discussed below).⁴⁹ Among other things, he developed the antecedent of Rawls' and Nussbaum's "overlapping consensus".⁵⁰

⁴⁹According to Archbishop Lazar Puhalo:

Personalism generally agrees with those Existentialist philosophers who hold that man has no essence and must form it by his decisions and actions. His autonomy makes man "the being who defines himself". He is *sine matre creatum*. This will not equal the patristic concept of *hypostasis*, but rather asserts an existence without an essence. Man would, in this system, give birth to his own essence and he would constitute his own essence. A particularly disturbing aspect of this is the disunity of mankind that such a position indicates. Orthodox Christianity understands that all mankind shares in the same essence, the [same] human nature (Puhalo 2008).

Bishop Puhalo's description of personalism's lacking an essence that serves as a basis for human unity does not fit with Maritain's personalism, as will be seen. (Roubiczek 1966) makes a similar criticism of existentialism.

⁵⁰That is, a theory concerning how people of different intellectual positions can nevertheless cooperate in practical matters. "Men mutually opposed in their theoretical conceptions can come to a merely practical agreement regarding a list of human rights" (Maritain 1951).

Yet he is also famous for his championing of human rights and playing an authorial role in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And as mentioned, Maritain's Christian humanism had a significant influence on the social encyclicals of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II (Sweet 2008).

Maritain's thought is still considered highly relevant, but is being selectively appropriated. David Hollenbach, an important thinker in his own right in terms of modern Catholic social thought and human rights, employs Maritain's insights to make a case for the role of the common good in Christian ethics. Hollenbach notes that the notion of contemplation of the Divine *esse* (presented above) as the starting point has been "rightly questioned" (Brackley 1980; Hollenbach-S.J. 2002, p. 133). Maritain's neo-scholasticism is set aside.

However, there is another omission of Maritain's thought that may pose trouble for a theology of human development, and is directly connected with the desire to rehabilitate the role of "shared nature" running through the entirety of this thesis. Hollenbach calls Maritain's approach "personalist communitarian" for its central affirmation that "personality tends by nature to communion" (Maritain 1966, p. 47; Hollenbach-S.J. 2002, p. 130). Social relations are dimensions of a person's "perfections"; they are not compensations for individual deficiencies and are developed through communal participation which constitutes the "common good". This of course is correct as far as it goes. But what Hollenbach fails to point out, and what Maritain consistently championed, was that shared nature, or the human essence or species (Maritain 1973, 187) served as a fundamental category for human dignity and solidarity. The human essence or nature is a common good that is beyond empirically experienced community and extends out and beyond the "communitarian" dimension of the common good. This omission of Hollenbach is odd because in his major chapter on "The global common good", he conspicuously omits this feature. And what is even potentially disturbing is that no

theological justification for global concern is given as an “alternative to both an abstract cosmopolitanism and a status quo acceptance of existing boundaries” (Hollenbach-S.J. 2002, p. 221). Hollenbach, instead of appealing to Maritain (or specifically Christian thinkers or texts), reverts to Kwame Anthony Appiah’s tepid “rooted cosmopolitanism” (Appiah 2006) as a way to balance these moral claims. Perhaps Hollenbach believed that the shared essence was a hangover from Maritain’s neo-scholasticism. If this is the reason for this omission, it is, however, a mistake.

Maritain provides powerful *theological* accounts of shared human nature as a basis for solidarity, for a global common good—and these do not depend on his controversial starting point in contemplation. Furthermore, Maritain balances this emphasis on essential nature with other features, namely a) the category of person and b) concrete communitarian forms of the common good. Maritain roundly criticizes both nominalists (who deny the existence of universals) for whom “human unity is but a word”, but also false forms of parochial solidarity and notes that great evils (e.g. Nazism) sought to create essential differences within the universally shared human essence (Maritain 1944, p. 6-7). It is important to emphasize just how Maritain’s “essential human unity” or natural law is *not* based on his controversial neo-scholastic starting point. It is rather similar to Martha Nussbaum’s that discerns from within experience nature’s normal functions—a study of the *inclinations* of human nature.⁵¹ However, unlike Nussbaum who relies on the principle of each person’s capability, for Maritain “The term *unity of mankind* is the Christian name, and the truest name, of the equality in nature between men” (Maritain 1944, p. 18).

⁵¹This is also Aquinas’s starting point: “Therefore, the order of the precepts of the natural law is according to the order of natural inclinations” (Albert, Denise et al. 1984, p. 117).

Maritain's theological anthropology thus operates with the three Trinitarian features maintained throughout this study: persons, in relations of communion, within the medium of a shared nature. Maritain never seems to have clearly separated out these three features, and he often distinguished and paired off differing features: the "sociability of the person and the properly human nature of the common good" (Maritain 1966, p. 55), or sometimes "faith in the dignity of the person and of common humanity" (Maritain 1946, p. 39). But all three categories are clearly operative. Furthermore, this framework and especially the role of shared nature concerns Maritain's very understanding of supernatural grace and its relation to the natural virtues, or the human side of development. Maritain contends that there is an "urge of a love infinitely stronger than the philanthropy commended by philosophers"; this love:

Surmount[s] the closed border of the natural social groups—family group and national group—and extended to the entire human race, because this love is the life in us of the very love which has created being and because it truly makes of each human being our neighbour. Without breaking the limits of flesh and blood, of self-interest, tradition and pride which are needed by the body politic ... such a love transcends to all men and at the same time transforms from within the very life of the group, and tends to integrate all humanity... (Maritain 1946, p. 42).⁵²

Thus supernatural grace is the work of building the human family as a family of families. It is the communitarian cosmopolitan position articulated in this thesis. This emphasis of working for the good of shared human nature is thus similar to Maximus's emphasis.⁵³ Balthasar notes about Maximus that:

⁵² Maritain was friends with and inspired by Henri Bergson. This passage is a commentary on a section of Henri Bergson's *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (Bergson 1935). Maritain cites extensively Bergson especially noting how democracy presupposes an ideal spiritual order (as natural law), and that, according to Bergson, Christianity is the historical inspiration behind this, even if it has become secularized.

⁵³ Staniloae notes, however, that the other concepts, person and interpersonal communion, were still not very well developed in the Fathers (Staniloae 1994, p. 73).

his letters constantly emphasize the duty to "universalize" one's personal efforts as a means of realizing the unity of human beings in their identical common nature, as something willed by God (Balthasar 2003, p. 162).⁵⁴

With this in mind, the earlier question can be restated: Is there hope of keeping the strengths of a natural law approach simultaneously with the focus on human action, community, and salvation history? Maritain maintained a firm insistence on both natural law, but also that the Christian “narrative” or theological understanding of the virtues plays a decisive, even leading role for revealing new possibilities for natural law, new possibilities for human experience itself. Note the following:

As there is a flowering of the natural law which can be attained only with the help of the virtues of the New Law, there is also a human flowering, a real humanism of civil life which can be attained only with the help of these virtues (Maritain 1944, p. 27).

This remarkable quote combines natural law, virtues, and the role of supernatural revelation, or the New Law in raising *overall* human moral standards. History “under the influence of the Christian leaven” (Maritain 1946, p. 43) gives rise to a new understanding of natural law, a new realization about what is possible for humanity and thus a revised set of moral expectations—and this widely recognized and not just to the eyes of faith. *Ab esse ad posse, valet illation*—from reality to possibility is a valid inference. Maritain thus addressed the question of how grace perfects nature in that grace, as a higher love, opens the heart to the love of all, and especially those “poor beings who have the same essence as we have ourselves, and the same sufferings, and the same natural dignity” (Maritain 1944, p. 108). Human rights is a concrete example of this dynamic for Maritain—how the outworking in history of Christian energies gave rise to a new and generally accepted set of moral expectations, birthed within, but now operative outside of explicit Christian presuppositions.

⁵⁴ Balthasar writes of the importance of Maximus, that if he has understood him correctly, “then Maximus surely takes on an unexpected relevance for today's intellectual scene. He is the philosophical and theological thinker who stands between East and West” (Balthasar 2003, p. 25).

Many, including Hollenbach, believe that Maritain's moral vision can be kept without his neo-scholastic starting point in contemplative reason. This would indeed seem desirable. But a separate question (and perhaps confounded by Hollenbach) is whether Maritain's moral vision can be coherently articulated if shared human nature as a theological category recedes from view. The contention here is that this would entail considerable losses. Furthermore, this could affect the intellectual coherence of the catholic encyclicals inasmuch as they are based on his thought.⁵⁵ This question is thus vitally important as several of these encyclicals have played a tremendous role in human development. The account now turns to a brief investigation of three of these, which are also the context for the deployment of a "new" development virtue in Catholicism—solidarity.

Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples), written in 1967 by Pope Paul VI, was an historic bellwether, predating the UN Declaration on the Right to Development (1986) by twenty years. *Populorum* emphasized that economic development should benefit all humankind and not just the few. It called for integral or authentic human development, that is, development in all its dimensions; it condemned massive disparities in wealth and heavy military expenditures in light of widespread suffering; it was an eloquent call to action. These insights are commonplace now, but at the time were revolutionary. The opening paragraph notes:

The progressive development of peoples is an object of deep interest and concern to the Church. This is particularly true in the case of those peoples who are trying to escape the ravages of hunger, poverty, endemic disease and ignorance; of those who are seeking a larger share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who are consciously striving for fuller growth (Paul-VI 1967).

⁵⁵Catholic theology after Vatican II shied away from abstract notions of human nature, and moved towards concreteness and natural hierarchies of human experience. This is an important corrective to an excessive focus on the human essence, but can be dangerous if taken too far. One author argues that Catholic social thought has been "concocted" on the basis of Maritain's "equalitarian" and natural rights *misreading* of Aquinas and his neglect of the body (McAleer 2005, p. xv). However, even if this criticism is correct, this would not supplant its social teaching as Catholic theology is not beholden to Aquinas as it once was.

Populorum was an expression of the new spirit of Vatican II and one of the final speeches was dedicated to Maritain.

Twenty years later, *Populorum* was commemorated by Pope John Paul II with a new Encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*. *Sollicitudo* noted that the world, “while preserving certain fundamental constants, has undergone notable changes”. These include increased unemployment, lack of housing, international debt, demographic problems, and the ideological bloc mentality between West and East. *Sollicitudo* repudiated both Western capitalism and Communism, “both concepts being imperfect and in need of radical correction”. “In order to be genuine, development must be achieved within the framework of solidarity and freedom, without ever sacrificing either of them under whatever pretext”.

Sollicitudo mentions solidarity as a “new” virtue. Solidarity emerges not merely through the recognition of greater global interdependencies, but that this “fact” must be infused with and guided by ethical values, and not merely instrumental ones. Interdependence can lead to greater vulnerabilities, domination, and injustices, or, if ethically guided, it can be beneficial and life-giving, that is, if the virtue of solidarity is exercised. Pope John Paul II defined his motto as *Opus solidaritatis pax*—peace as the fruit of solidarity. Hollenbach calls solidarity “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good” (Hollenbach-S.J. 1995, p. 189). Solidarity involves agency, communal associations, and (for *Sollicitudo*) all exercised on behalf of global solidarity, or shared humanity:

An essential condition for global solidarity is autonomy and free self-determination, also within associations such as those indicated. But at the same time solidarity demands a readiness to accept the sacrifices necessary for the good of the whole world community (Paul-II 1987).

Solidarity is added to the list of virtues to tie human action more closely to addressing the needs of the world. Furthermore, this virtue must be exercised on multiple levels: personal, communal-institutional, and with global-institutional ramifications.

But how is this virtue classified? Would solidarity be a natural virtue, and thus connected to human effort and agency, or would it be a supernatural virtue, a “created grace” infused by God? Solidarity would seem to be most closely associated with the theological virtue of love. But as Hollenbach notes,

Solidarity will not be found on the lists of cardinal [natural] virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude that were central for the Greeks and Romans, nor among the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, enumerated by Christian thinkers of the past (Hollenbach-S.J. 2002, p. 189).

This inability to place solidarity involves the separation of the domains of grace and nature. This inability to place the “new” virtue solidarity shows the problematic nature of these divisions. However, it seems clear that in the light of Vatican II, there is less concern to fit all experience into a timeless theological system, and more of a focus on practice, truth as doing, truth as transformation.

The Catholic Church’s social teaching directly relating to human development did not end with *Sollicitudo* but continued in Pope Benedict XVI’s Encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, published in 2009. Much of it retraces old ground, but notes globalization as a key feature of the 21st century. A continuing fundamental theme is that “the development of peoples depends above all on recognizing that the human race is a single family”. Pope Benedict states that while reason alone can identify and quantify inequality, and while globalisation has made all humans interdependent, neither can establish the sense of fraternity which flows from God’s love. Christian “truth in love” concerns transformative *praxis*, but the ontological horizon is not abandoned:

Truth, in fact, is *logos* which creates *dia-logos*, and hence communication and communion. Truth, by enabling men and women to let go of their subjective opinions and impressions, allows them to move beyond cultural and historical limitations and to come together in the assessment of the value and substance of things. Truth opens and unites our minds in the *logos* of love: this is the Christian proclamation and testimony of charity. In the present social and cultural context, where there is a widespread tendency to relativize truth, practising charity in truth helps people to understand that adhering to the values of Christianity is not merely useful but essential for building a good society and for true integral human development (Benedict-XVI 2009).

While there were many expressions of Catholic moral theology in the wake of Vatican II that distanced itself from natural law (ontology) in favour of scripture or liturgy, or especially salvation-history, Cardinal Ratzinger (well before becoming Pope) did not abandon the universal *logos*, but combined it with the particularity of salvation history and the sphere of human action. He sought a multi-dimensional approach and criticized theologies that were rooted *only* in agency/freedom—Bultmann’s existentialism, or salvation history in opposition to metaphysics/ontology—the early Barth, or only in the political community—Moltmann and Metz (Ratzinger 1987, pp/ 171-192).

Other solutions to this problematic have been sought by Catholic thinkers emphasizing one or other dimensions. The work of Germain Grisez and John Finnis involves a “new” approach to natural law that grounds itself in practical reason (agency) alone. The motivation for this arises precisely from the failure of scholastic theories (which start from theoretical/timeless reason) to adequately “recognize the open-ended quality of human nature” which left “no room for [persons] to unfold themselves through intelligent creativity and freedom” (Grisez 1983, p. 105-6). This is important because the capabilities approach is linked with this natural law approach which will be examined in the next chapter.

The earlier question of relating supernatural revelation understood as salvation history to human development is admittedly a challenging problematic,⁵⁶ and one that will be fully addressed in chapter nine. There are undoubtedly other ways this problem has been addressed in both Catholic and Protestant theology. For EO however, the virtues are central to this task. With this in mind, this chapter had the modest aim of demonstrating some historical tendencies in relation to the virtues with a view to a) understanding why the virtues are frequently asserted to be incompatible with Christianity (e.g. Protestantism rejects them), and b) providing a backdrop for interpreting the distinctive EO approach especially in relation to Catholicism. This background work is important because it will be seen over the next two chapters precisely how it is that the virtues, and the related notion of practical reason, bridge the conceptual chasm between faith and human development within EO.

⁵⁶ Ratzinger commented on its difficulty, pointed to the brilliance of, but ultimately unsatisfying nature of Rahner's attempt to adequately address the relation between metaphysics/ontology and salvation-history (Ratzinger 1987, p. 163).

8. META-ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ORTHODOX VIRTUES

Not all Orthodox thinkers emphasize the virtues in *theosis*. John Zizioulas, for instance, relates concern for the virtues to a “moralism” that is inadequate for the real problem which he describes as overcoming death.¹ However, Maximus the Confessor notes that humans manifest God in the world through virtues (Russell 2004, p. 278) and Irenaeus of Lyons noted that the virtues are a participation in Christ himself (Spidlik 1986, p. 76). Nicholas Cabasilas in a classic text wrote “to tend towards virtue is to worship God” (Cabasilas 1974) and Staniloae argued that the movement from image to likeness (from Being to Well-being) is through the virtues (Staniloae 2000, p. 90). Staniloae is thus unexceptional in his emphasis on virtue. However, before investigating the Orthodox catalogue of virtues as might be expected at this point, it is important to follow up on several “meta-ethical” aspects, which is to say about the overall approach of Orthodoxy. By gaining a better picture of the overall structure and landscape, individual virtues, their sequencing and priorities, can receive a more penetrating treatment. Not only this, but a meta-ethical analysis can facilitate a more profound level of dialogue between traditions, both religious and social scientific, than merely comparing lists. Thus the discussion about the specific Orthodox virtues will not take place in this chapter as might be expected, but will be postponed until the next.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: First, the claim that Staniloae is offering a “moral science” of human development will be examined in dialogue with Aristotle’s *phronesis*. Second, the account will explore in more detail the non-separation of natural from supernatural virtues and the significance of this for linking theology with HD.

¹ “No, death is not conquered like that ... By morality creation improves itself but it does not save itself from death” (Zizioulas 2002; Zizioulas 2006, p. 258; Bates 2010).

Following this, the *priority* of practical reason² over contemplative reason will be analyzed in that practical reason is indeed *prior*, or first, but there are also follow-up stages in the movement from practical reason to contemplative reason on the road to *theosis*. This is essential to address the true nature of Orthodoxy's "mysticism", about which there is much confusion. Lastly, a profound correlation will be examined between Orthodoxy's emphasis on practical reason, and its central role in development studies.

8.1 A *phronetic* science of human development

At the outset, the perhaps striking thesis is offered that Staniloae presents EO as a "science" of human development or well-being, but scientific only if this is understood in the *phronetic* sense of the term. To understand this claim one can reflect on what calling something a "science" might mean. As Aristotle noted long ago, the sciences must deal with "what is good for all cases, or for a specific type; because the sciences not only are said to be but are concerned with common facts"; it is "to the study of the universal ... that the sciences deal" (Aristotle 2004, p. 280-281). Aristotle's genius in his account of *phronesis* or practical reason was to combine this "universal" feature of science with reflexive human *activity* within concrete situations, which is to say, a "science" of how rational principles apply in variable activity-contexts. And this combination of the universal and particular of course involves judgment or wisdom that can never be reducible to these selfsame principles. But if universality is a validating criterion for a "science", Staniloae is certainly offering Orthodox theology as a human *moral* science. Staniloae signals this intention on multiple occasions and in multiple registers. He writes consistently of the principles which serve the "general development of humankind" (Staniloae 2003, p. 211), but also how the selfish "passions" actually distort one's ability to

² Practical reason is simply the English translation of *phronesis*; it is more close to the original Aristotelian sense and is to be distinguished from the Kantian; this will be explained briefly below.

perceive the *logoi*, and the ensuing moral obligation to develop these potentials in oneself precisely to develop others'. These passions distort not only perception of the *logoi* as universal signposts to well-being, but the passions deter one from embracing "the general remedy by which we can return to the way of truth ... the steps of this healing" which are the virtues. Staniloae describes this process of growth as "a going out from isolation and an entrance into the universal" (Staniloae 2003, p. 213).

That Orthodoxy values the "universal" can easily be confirmed by noting again its Trinitarian theological anthropology, where person, communion, and shared *nature* are all emphasized.³ There are structures that are universals: "reasons", "sleeping possibilities", "categories of being which make up the world", "natural possibilities and laws of nature", "bundles of common attributes", "examples of the same species", "notions" or "essences" of things, and so forth (Staniloae 2003, p. 200). Thus shared nature, or the universal underlying features, is one dimension of the Trinitarian anthropology, but this is the dimension that clearly signals that Orthodoxy can be amenable to a "science" of human development.

And it is significant that Orthodoxy views not just nature (or Being), but aspects of *theosis* (or the movement to Well-being) as a "scientific" developmental process in that there is a method (Staniloae 2000, p. 200), and clear stages, and it operates within the parameters of nature's laws. Staniloae thus affirms that not just the category of Being involves nature's norms, but the category of Well-being as well: "the first stages of deification [Being and Well-being] ... are subject to laws of nature" (Staniloae 2003, p. 366). Only Eternal-being is beyond the domain of these laws. Thus there are not only structures for Being, but for

³ Obviously communion is a property of universal nature, but it has to be actualized in concrete situations and relationships in non-universal ways. This concrete communion partakes of both the involuntary (or already given—e.g. one is born into this particular family with these particular relations and this genetic heritage) but also the voluntary in the sense that this already given must be actualized through agency.

Well-being, that is, the exercise of agency. This structuring of human agency is the virtues.

Many other doctrines illustrate this possibility of a “scientific” principle in Orthodoxy, even including the previously mentioned one of humans being a microcosm. “Man shares his essence with all the categories of beings”, but is to exercise his agency in the unification of the entire creation (Spidlik 1986, p. 141). Humans make real through work and bring to completion a unity of voluntary love that is already there “involuntarily”, as it were, structured in nature.⁴ Lastly, and to show the continuity of natural revelation and supernatural, Staniloae explicitly says that the Logos or Christ is the “natural law”, and contrary to claims that Orthodoxy holds no natural law, “a threefold incorporation [or embodiment] of the Logos can be spoken of: in nature, in Scripture, and in His [Christ, the Logos] individual human body” (Staniloae 2003, p. 221), the latter being the most unambiguous expression.⁵

The claim that Staniloae is offering a universal moral science can best be interpreted in the light of Aristotle’s notion of *phronesis*, or what Staniloae himself calls the “skill of discernment” (Staniloae 2003, p. 196) or even more clearly, “the relationship of our deed or thing with the universal order” (Staniloae 2003, p. 197). *Phronesis*, though variable, is not merely subjective; it is still a moral science and epistemological criteria exist to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Worth mentioning again is Aristotle’s precise definition of *phronesis* as “a true state, reasoned, and capable of action with regard to

⁴ This seems to be one of Paul Ricoeur’s concerns via existentialism where freedoms are too unstructured. Human action within the world involves an ontology of selfhood where self, and being in the world, are correlates. But it is not the mere “facticity” of the world as ground of being that is of concern, but that the world is structured as potentiality and actuality, as are humans, and there must be a “specific coordination” of human action with a larger world that is itself not formless (Ricoeur 1992, pp. 312-315).

⁵ In Christ’s Incarnation, “for the first time, [righteousness reached our race and] appeared to men in its reality and perfection” (Cabasilas 1974, p. 53). But this is not a simple negation of human loves: “But if human love is so great, the divine love is inconceivable” (Cabasilas 1974, p. 47).

things that are good or bad for man" (in Flyvbjerg 2001, p. 2). This is to say that Staniloae's affirmation of Orthodoxy as a science of human development is basically Aristotelian in structure (or best illuminated by this parallel) and follows major features of the *phronetic* tradition. This *phronetic* aspect of Orthodoxy is so foundational that it must be returned to later, but after the relationship between natural and supernatural virtues is examined.

8.2 No natural-supernatural separation

It has been mentioned many times that EO does not separate the virtues into natural and supernatural; it is now necessary to elaborate this and its relevance for connecting faith and development.⁶ All of nature, every dimension, is a manifestation of God's creative power, including and especially the greatest gift, human agency, but no more so than when it is expressed in and for communion and an extension of this communion especially to the vulnerable, whoever they are.

In EO, *all* the virtues are understood to involve the exercise of natural, God-given, powers. Maximus affirmed: "The virtues are natural, i.e. they are expressions of man's true nature" (Thunberg 1985, p. 102) and anything that thwarts this development can be viewed as sinful, whether it have an internal source in human agency, or external source in environmental/structural factors. *Theosis* is identified with the development of human nature itself, the structures of human nature, but above all free will (Spidlik 1986, p. 101-102), or as Staniloae puts it, "man endowed with reason, with conscience, and with

⁶ Staniloae does occasionally reference the supernatural virtues, but this is related more to the category of Eternal-being and was treated under this heading above about deification in the "strict sense" which "belongs only to the ages to come" (Staniloae 2003). Similarly, grace and nature are closely linked, but occasionally, with exceptional experiences such as Maximus's discussion of Paul being caught up to the "third heaven", grace by-passes nature. But these are exceptional cases as the normal spiritual development process of Staniloae will make clear.

freedom” (Staniloae 1994, p. 1). Because of the non-separation of natural and supernatural virtues, the entire set of Orthodox virtues can in principle also be part of the social sciences because they are viewed as natural features of human existence. This clearly implies the possibility of an improved relationship between the social sciences and religion where the virtues are simultaneously supernatural and fully natural.

In Orthodoxy what is natural is what God’s original intention in creation was. Notice the following remarkable statement:

Christ has preserved free will delivering it from the passions and setting it at peace with nature. It is precisely through this harmonizing of the will with nature that the reconciliation of man with God is achieved (Staniloae 1980, p. 190).

Reconciliation with God and nature are on a similar plane, a similarity which has consequences for the relationship between natural and supernatural virtues. Christ restored “the greatness of the divine image” meaning that reason and freedom (precisely as features of human nature) are liberated; they are freed from enslavement to the passions, to selfishness and “hostile pleasures” (Cook 2010), and are given the renewed possibility to be harmonized with the good of nature. And “harmonizing the will with nature”, or reconciliation with God, has both to do with the proper exercise of each and every human function, but also restoring the will to a concern for common human nature that has fallen into disrepair, been “shredded”, because of sin. “The human will has cut the bond of unity between men by its own arbitrary and selfish choice” (Staniloae 1980, p. 190-191) and restoring, reactivating this dormant unity and the functioning of the relevant capacities is central to *theosis*. Christ then is the archetype of humanity who recovers union with God precisely by restoring union with and between humans, and the proper exercise of human faculties or powers (Staniloae 1980, p. 191). All of this is to describe, in Maximus’ language, *theosis* as “joining inclination to nature” (Bradshaw 2004, p. 201). How does one participate in this uniting of the will with nature, or nature’s true intentions? Christ is

the Logos, and all of creation, all of nature, participates in the one unique Logos through the *logoi*, creation's structures, principles, and tendencies which are summed up in Christ. Humanity activates this by a "working philosophy" or "keeping the commandments" which are simply the two Great Commandments: to love God and neighbour. In the category of Well-being (and this is the domain of the virtues), salvation is a return to, activation of, future exploration and thus extension of (c.f. *epektasis*) nature's good possibilities. There is no "ontologically pure" nature to which supernatural grace must be added for it to commit virtuous acts" (Tollefsen 2008, p. 181). Supernatural revelation or grace "merely" (Staniloae 1994, p. 1) provides a support for that immanent direction or movement within nature—the voluntary movement of the human creature if it is acting rationally.

But at this point one might rightly ask: if Orthodoxy does not separate the natural from the supernatural virtues, what are the differences then between, for example, Aristotle's understanding of the virtues and those of EO? Staniloae notes that in many respects the Fathers follow Aristotle especially in terms of the various faculties (Staniloae 2003). But there are at least three key differences between Orthodox virtues and Aristotle that will briefly be mentioned: a) a natural human capacity for relating to God; b) the expanded scope of relations with humankind; and c) the role of humility.

First, unlike Aristotle for whom God as Unmoved Mover is by definition indifferent to human concerns, it is "natural" in Orthodoxy for humans to have a *tendency* for communion with a God who has exercised his love (*philanthropia*) for them, even if only experienced dimly in creation. Basil notes that the love of God is "innate in our souls and implanted by nature" (in Spidlik 1986, p. 299). It appears to be a paradoxical part of the created to seek after the Uncreated. There is, as was seen in the section on Eternal-being, an "ontological longing of our nature" (Staniloae 2003, p. 34) for the Transcendent. Even

Aristotle's preference for contemplation of the more "eternal" universal can be interpreted as a dim example of this human aspiration. More fully for Orthodoxy, as natural properties "humans were endowed with tendencies [*logoi*] toward the good of communion with God and his fellow human beings" (Staniloae 2000, p. 103). Well-being is multidimensional, but one of these dimensions is a capacity, expressed as longing, for communion with the Ultimate.

The second difference with Aristotle is indeed about neighbour relations and is the Christian answer, versus Aristotle's, to "Who is my neighbour?", or, as one might say in Aristotle's terms, "who is my friend"? Aristotle notes that justice is connected to intimacy, to close friendships. Goodwill is undeveloped friendship (Aristotle 2004, p. 239) and Aristotle is known to have argued for a limited scope of deep friends, as did Cicero (Cicero 1971). This leads to a sliding scale of moral commitments. "It is natural that the claims of justice should increase with the intensity of friendship" (Aristotle 2004, p. 215). Thus one dimension of the Incarnation, or grace, is meant to address this limited scope of concern. The Gospel is Good News for all because it is a moral vision aiming to extend the radius of concern beyond intimates and special relations. While a cosmopolitan ethic that completely ignores special relations such as family is morally reckless, Christianity nonetheless seeks to extend the radius of moral concern beyond that of an Aristotelian or Ciceronian understanding of justice as tied to intimate friendship. Aristotle's methodology of appealing to social convention furthermore prevents him from challenging social conventions in a radical fashion. The Samaritan story, as the decisive answer to the Christian question of "who is my neighbour", aspires toward this moral universalism.

Lastly, and this is linked with the two above, is the virtue of humility. Aristotle's portrait of the "magnanimous man" (the *megalopsuchia*, the "great-souled" mentioned briefly in chapter 6) is the opposite of humility. Aristotle argues that the *megalopsuchia* is "disposed

to confer benefits, but is ashamed to accept them” and this because “one is the act of a superior and the other that of an inferior”. The *megalopsuchia* takes on few tasks, except when they are “grand and celebrated”. And:

The accepted view ... is that his gait is measured, his voice deep, and his speech unhurried. For since he takes few things seriously, he is not excitable, and since he regards nothing as great, he is not highly strung ... (Aristotle 2004, pp. 97-98).

These traits are celebrated because they “are more consistent with self-sufficiency”. This is in starkest contrast with the role of humility as a virtue in Christianity, emblazoned for all time when the “Teacher” donned the servant’s towel and scandalized the inner circle of his disciples by washing their filthy feet—and commanding them precisely in his quality as their Lord and Master, to do likewise. Indeed, there can be no doubt that *this* ideal, derived from the Christian story, has become part of the common apprehension of humanity where “servant leadership” is commended in various domains (Greenleaf 2002).

These three departures from Aristotle are interrelated. Because God cares for all of humankind and is not indifferent, this expands the circumference of moral concern and to whom the virtue of justice should be exercised. This in turn gives rise to a set of virtues that are less aristocratic and haughty, and orientated directly to social inclusion. Christian virtues, however, are not mere abstract ethical principles that exist in a textbook (even Scripture); rather they emerge from reflective practice, from following the example and teachings of Christ as the new Adam, God’s full intentions for humanity—and this as the point of departure for practical reason or wisdom.

It will be seen that Orthodoxy puts an emphasis on the virtues of “repair”,⁷ a set of virtues that are aimed not so much at giving a complete description of all dimensions of virtue or

⁷ This “repair” is not to be confused with a juridical understanding of forgiveness of sins. It includes forgiveness in the sense of God giving the human creature a new beginning. Orthodoxy does see the cross

human functions, but at the more fundamental task of getting humanity back on track for well-being—and working for the well-being of all. And placing practical reason prior to contemplative is critical for this reorientation.

8.3 Practical Reason prior to Contemplative

For Staniloae and the Orthodox tradition in general, this concern with getting humanity back on track has to do with prioritizing practical reason over contemplative. There is a formula in Orthodoxy that is generally followed: *praxis* precedes *theoria*, and it is only through *praxis* one can ascend into theory or contemplation (Spidlik 1986, p. 334). Or as Staniloae puts it:

The believer who wants to gain perfection, before he becomes a *gnostikos* (a knower) must be a *praktikos* (a doer). Someone can't see the *logoi* in things and by them God the Word, the Logos, if he hasn't first dedicated himself to a "working philosophy" or to a "doing of the commandments" (Staniloae 2003, p. 43).

This attempt to mitigate the effects of Greek rationalism (that also deeply affect theology) was simply the awareness that the mind or rational faculty is not separate and unaffected by one's overall moral or spiritual orientation, or what is called "the heart", the principle of unity within a person (Spidlik 1986, p. 105). This is a fundamental concern for Orthodoxy, and Staniloae criticized scholasticism in this regard:

The separation between God's knowledge as a theoretical occupation and his wisdom as a practical occupation appeared in the West at the same time as scholasticism, and suffers from an exalting of the value of speculative knowledge in itself, detached from a transforming role that would thus connect it with love (Staniloae 1994, p. 211-12).

playing this role: "We were justified, first by being set free ... in that He who had done no evil pleaded for us by dying on the cross. By this He paid the penalty for the sins which we had audaciously committed ..." (Cabasilas 1974, p. 53). But *theosis* involves human agency in bringing about well-being or fullness of life for all, following Christ as example. This will be detailed in chapter nine.

However, before discussing in further detail Orthodoxy's giving *praxis* priority to *theoria*, several cautions are required to avoid misinterpretation. First, it is important to note that *praxis* here does not mean necessarily what it means in the West. *Praxis* is related not only to social action or charity—it *is* this—but also relates to worship, to the *practice* of the liturgy, as well as moral asceticism and purification (Spidlik 1986). Staniloae censures Western thought for separating dogma from “practice”, and this sense of *praxis* is indeed related to worship, but it is also related to social ethics, to “keeping the commandments” primarily understood as charity. Staniloae would see these various understandings of *praxis* as an integrated whole in the Church, mutually implicating, and to abstract one dimension is to distort the fullness. However, and this is the second caution, *praxis* is all too often understood as only the liturgical actions in the Church, and this is a major obstacle to a theology of development. This limited understanding of *praxis* led to a privatized and ritualized understanding of religion. This was enforced by Communism where religion was allowed no public role except praising the achievements of the communist party (Stan and Turcescu 2000, p. xiv). However, Staniloae links the liturgy or practice within the church with the practice outside the Church, a theme which Staniloae's disciple Ion Bria termed: “the liturgy after the liturgy” (Bria 1996).⁸ Third, and perhaps more obviously, Staniloae's account of practical reason should not be confused with Kant's. Immanuel Kant grounded the principles of ethics in individual reason and freedom alone (like Amartya Sen) and thus the discovery of his supreme (and highly abstracted) principle of practical reason, the “categorical imperative” (Beck 1984).⁹ These

⁸ Bria references John Chrysostom who uses a beautiful metaphor of the Eucharist being food for “pilgrims” on their way from the altar of service in the sanctuary to the altar of service in the public square. The term “liturgy” has a rich Greek background and meant public service. Wealthy citizens were expected to discharge public needs at their own expense: outfit a warship, sponsor a festival, and many other public beneficences.

⁹ Kant (via the “categorical imperative” which is highly abstract) radically altered and many argue distorted the nature of Aristotelian practical reason that was concerned about right action for a specific situation. The academic literature surrounding DS, especially Nussbaum (as well as philosophers like Ricoeur), use practical reason in the non-Kantian sense, and that is the sense intended here. Sen distances himself from this

cautions being given, the account of how Orthodoxy does indeed prioritize *praxis* over *theoria* can proceed.

The prioritization of practical reason over contemplative reason in Orthodoxy is expressed in many ways: “the road to knowledge passes through the observance of the commandments”, “virtue precedes knowledge”, Orthodoxy as “mysticism”, and perhaps most significantly, in the Liturgy itself.

Immediately before reciting the Creed in the Eucharistic Liturgy, we say these words: "Let us love one another, so that we may with one mind confess Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in essence and undivided". Note the words "so that". A genuine confession of faith in the Triune God can be made only by those who, after the likeness of the Trinity, show love mutually towards each other (Ware 1998, p. 38).

This asserts that theological truth is impossible without loving *praxis*, and in some sense, is prior to theology. Indeed, “faith” itself in the scriptures and the early church often means *praxis*, not just belief, but the “lived” Christian life, which is impossible without charity. Charity, the pinnacle of *praxis*, proves the correctness of *theoria* (Spidlik 1986, p. 11).

There are many reasons why practice is prior to theory, but perhaps the most important one for a theology of human development is that nature’s real or intended properties will not emerge without loving actions. There are emergent human qualities that depend on certain kinds of practical activity (and emotional/dispositional states) for their development. This is to say that the realm of contemplation (Aristotle’s realm of *episteme*, or universal features or structures of human existence) cannot even be conceptualized properly as properties of the human without preceding action to unlock, develop and discover these potentials. There is thus a fundamental difference with neo-scholasticism (discussed in the

universalizing aspect of Kantian practical reason with a position known as “positional objectivity”, or action that is right for a particular situation (Sen 2002).

previous chapter) in that a dynamic relationship is presupposed between moral agency (Well-being) with nature's ontological structures (Being).

Furthermore, it is not just any type of practical activity that unleashes universal potentials or functions. As Rousseau quoted Aristotle on the title page of his famous *Discourse on Inequality*: "What is natural has to be investigated not in beings that are depraved, but in those that are good according to nature" (Rousseau 1997, p. 113). Thus only the activation of nature's tendencies and the relation of actions to outcomes, studied over intervals of time and even generations, can reveal nature's true properties or structures (the realm of *episteme*). And one can never rest content with any particular configuration because nature's potentials are dynamic, not locked in time. Thus nature's structures cannot be fully conceptualized without human intervention that in turn acts on and develops these selfsame structures.

8.4 Staniloae's Three Stages

EO does not focus only on *praxis*, but it does start there. There is another analysis—in addition to the Being, Well-being, Eternal-being progression—of the movement in *theosis* that bears further examination in that it starts not with Being, but with the Well-being, agency, or practical reason category—thus reversing the temporal relationship. Staniloae develops this considerably and there are three clear stages. These are: 1) the life of practical reason, 2) natural contemplation, and 3) theological contemplation.

8.4.1 Practical Reasoning or *phronesis* (First stage of spiritual ascent)

Phronesis, it will be remembered, is practical reason or wisdom,¹⁰ and is the comprehensive life of virtue, and virtue is constitutive of *theosis*. While the term *praxis* used above clearly denotes activity or action, it does not capture the fullness of *phronesis*. *Phronesis* is a more comprehensive term and includes action, but also denotes rational reflection, and both of these in regard to what is good or bad for humans. Many aspects relevant to this stage have already been touched upon, thus new directions will be emphasized. However, a greater understanding of *phronesis* in EO is significant because the social sciences are being revitalized around this concept (Bellah 1982; Taylor 1993; Richardson 1994; Flyvbjerg 2001).

Moral or practical reason¹¹ discerns the *logoi* or rational principles of existence, but only through extended experience with, and reflection upon action. But there is a problem: the beginner is without experience! This is why it is said that wisdom or *phronesis* starts with keeping the commandments, because the commandments are the beginning commitment and steps of a life consciously orientated towards the two irreducible goods of human existence, love of God and love of neighbour. Thus unlike most modern practical

¹⁰There is a deep connection between Staniloae's understanding of practical or moral reason, and the Trinity. He writes:

Wisdom in this sense can have no other bases than the perfection of the Trinitarian communion. Through wisdom God wants to lead all things towards the perfection that radiates from that communion ... [and] it is only life together that implies or demands the efforts made to achieve wisdom (Staniloae 1994, p. 214).

¹¹Staniloae's terminology varies considerably which is why both "moral" and "practical" reason are mentioned. Typically, a contrast is made between *praxis* and *theoria*, but these are some expressions illustrating the same basic contrast: a) practical discernment versus contemplative knowledge; b) *diakrisis* (discernment) versus *gnosis*; c) the discerning of good versus evil in a particular circumstance versus understanding the universal *logoi*; d) work of a "practical nature" versus contemplative; e) the work of virtuous activity versus the insights of faith; and f) being a *praktikos* (worker, doer) versus *theoretikos* (seer or contemplative) (Staniloae 2003). This distinction was fundamental in classical philosophy and was picked up by the Fathers. Gregory Nazianzen writes: "Understand by *theoria* an examining of the intelligibles (*skepsis noeton*) and by *praxis* the sphere of action" (Spidlik 1986, p. 179).

reasoning approaches, Orthodoxy starts with an explicitly ethical orientation to safeguard the accumulation of a certain quality of experience.

Orthodoxy affirms that only the person aiming to *act* in accordance with the *logoi*, and extended reflection on this process, can approach being fully rational. There are (at least) three distinct dimensions to this “virtue epistemology”, two positive and one negative. The first (and already mentioned) is that the very “logos” of the human person consists in the active use of various faculties, not in their mere possession. Discernment of the *logoi* or proper tendencies is only possible through practical activity inasmuch as many of them are emergent properties. Second, these various laws and functions (*logoi*) exist in complex intra and inter-subjective relations and even more complex historical situations; thus there is no formulaic way to know what the right course of action is in any specific context. Third, Christian *phronesis* involves a type of ascetical self-restraint so that the moral claims for the development of the vulnerable “other” can be heard over the din of one’s own cravings.

This ascetical dimension helps ensure a positive outcome for reasoning and action. Asceticism can aid rationality by keeping the mind from tricking itself as to its own true good as a shared good, and thus its good as interconnected with others and the moral responsibilities involved therewith. Without asceticism, one tendency or faculty in human nature, such as appetite, can gain hegemony over reason and reason then becomes rationalization; reason does the bidding of the appetite provincially conceived, versus the appetite serving the greater whole of human nature. Addiction is such a case and it can lead to “the destructive research of lust”, a brilliant phrase coined by Maximus the Confessor (Thunberg 1985, p. 156). The life of virtue (or *phronesis*) is thus connected with the disposition and clarity of mind for the moral agent “to be enlightened in regard to

his purposes and duties” (Staniloae 2003, p. 113). This is why the whole person must be strengthened as “the will is a function of our entire nature” (Staniloae 2003, p. 104).

Building on the experience learned from obedience to the basic commands,¹² *phronesis* is the name for the increased capacity for action and reflection on the consequences of action—and thus how to “best size up the circumstances of every situation” (Staniloae 2003, p. 196). *Phronesis* is how best to realize the command to love in every varied circumstance and only “striving by deeds accustoms me with these judgments” (Staniloae 2003, p. 214). Staniloae echoes Aristotle’s language when he writes: “We must exercise ourselves in sensitive acts to gain sensitivity”, exercise ourselves in faithful acts to become faithful, but above all, exercise ourselves in charitable acts to become charitable (Staniloae 2003, p. 163). It is worth noting how Staniloae’s presentation of practical reason parallels *phronetic* social science discourse concerning the requirements of context, experience, intuition, bodily sensation, trial and error, all of these including but going beyond analysis and discursive rationality towards expert judgement (Flyvbjerg 2001, p. 23). Ethics can never be reduced to following rules, as understanding the rules of a game is not the same as playing the game (Flyvbjerg 2001, p. 43). Staniloae notes that “We realize that discernment (*diakrisis*) is based on evidence larger than what we can include in our judgement or conception” (Staniloae 2003, p. 215). Experienced persons of mature judgement know more than they can explain. Notice Staniloae’s version where these themes are explicit:

By exercise the power of observation is sharpened more and more, as well as the comprehension of the *logoi* of things, the intentions of God by them, and the consequences of our deeds for our neighbours and ourselves (Staniloae 2003, p. 216).

¹² Also, the commands are underspecified such that they cannot be exercised without considerable use of practical reason or discernment.

It is significant that “prudence”, a no longer viable translation of *phronesis*, is connected with “foresight”, of seeing “what is coming up in the road”. *Phronesis* is seeing the likely consequences resulting from a certain course of activity. *Phronesis* is a growth in this virtue of foresight, a growth in the capacity of predicting the outcomes, good, bad, and mixed, for actions and dispositions. Furthermore, acquiring *phronesis* is no simple matter because principles or actions which may at one stage of life be seen as ultimate, at a later are seen as interlocked and subordinate to other and higher principles. This growth in moral judgement involves a lifetime of “learning by doing”, and this largely as problem-solving, sharing one another’s burdens. Staniloae wisely suggested that “Orthodoxy must go beyond its theoretical anthropology to become like a Saint, involved in the specific human relationships found in the complicated circumstances of our daily lives” (Staniloae 1980, p. 19).

“Wisdom is justified by her children,” which is to say that judgement about wisdom’s true nature must be taken by evaluating its effects “over a lifetime”, or, to take the maxim literally—several lifetimes. As mentioned, much modern moral philosophy tends to take a “snapshot” view of ethical decision-making “in isolated moments of choice”, ignoring *patterns* of motivation, history, the narrative structure of the self, and is thus defective (Nussbaum 1999, p. 172). Practical reason (of the non-Kantian variety) on the other hand, demands a narrative structure. But as has been emphasized, certain ways of focusing on narrative can create distance from common human experience as was seen with Stanley Hauerwas and the early MacIntyre. The Christian philosopher Paul Ricoeur has offered helpful insights in connecting narrative with practical reason. He notes that “narrative intelligibility shows more kinship with practical reason or moral judgement than with theoretical reason” (Ricoeur 1995, p. 239). He notes that through the “art of emplotment” (giving something a narrative structure), the actions, dispositions, contexts, situations, reversals of fortune, and triumphs or failures of a specific moral agent can be woven

together into a meaningful whole. It is through narrative that not timeless laws, but nonetheless rational patterns linking actions and consequences, virtue and well-being, emerge. Narratives in turn shape the identities of persons in communities who share certain stories. But lest one think that Ricoeur champions Hauerwas' strongly communitarian position that isolates Christian experience from that of humanity, Ricoeur notes that the application of "narratology" to Biblical narratives "testifies to this continuity between religious and nonreligious narratives" (Ricoeur 1995, p. 241). Some stories have universal relevance. Ricoeur's point is helpful here because he connects narrative and practical reason/*phronesis* in a way that does not *a priori* segregate Christian experience from the concerns of wider humanity.¹³ However, Ricoeur also notes that biblical narratives "intensify" some "traits that have been overlooked" in general narratives, a point which will be examined more thoroughly in the next chapter.

Thus *phronesis* is not only about the capacity for action, not only about right judgement in regards to action and its moral ends, but also involves weaving all of these dimensions (action, rational reflection, moral ends) into a coherent pattern through time. However, the plurality of human goods and their interaction with variable history and traditions means that what counts for wisdom, or what Charles Taylor calls "strong evaluation" (Taylor 1993), can indeed vary significantly between traditions. One would not hear Aristotle arguing a strong case for this taken directly from the Orthodox Lenten ascetical readings: "Open your mouth for the dumb, for the rights of all who are left desolate. Open your mouth, judge righteously; maintain the rights of the poor and needy" (Monastery 2012).¹⁴

¹³ In other words Ricoeur can further conceptualize how special revelation (Biblical narrative) and general human experience (philosophy) can be kept in a close relationship.

¹⁴ This passage is from Proverbs 31.

Thus there is a Christian *phronesis* that must not only try and take into account the multi-dimensional nature of human goods, but also “maintain the rights of the poor and needy”, which is to say, strive to remedy *their* situation.¹⁵ And this points to an important weakness in Aristotle’s account of *phronesis*. Aristotle’s account ignores the reality of conflict, of power relations, and how the pursuit of the good life can be systematically denied to some.

Bent Flyvbjerg is among the recent voices arguing that a renaissance of the social sciences is possible by a return to *phronesis* (Flyvbjerg 2001). But his contribution is more specific: he exposes and corrects accounts of practical reason that fail to address asymmetrical relations of power. Practical reason in its “naive”, pre-critical form addresses three “value-rational” questions:

- a) Where are we going?
- b) Is this desirable?
- c) What should be done?

However, as such, these three questions fail to scrutinize the “we” that is allowed, or not, to participate in the value-rational determinations. Flyvbjerg, drawing largely from Foucault, includes this fourth question into the account of *phronesis*:

- d) Who gains and who loses; by which mechanisms of power (Flyvbjerg 2001, p. 145)?

¹⁵ If *phronesis* aims at *eudaimonia*, then it is clear that Biblical wisdom aims at *eudaimonia* for all, and especially the vulnerable. “Blessed is he who considers the poor! The Lord delivers him...” (Psalm 41:1).

Critical “phronetic” analysis will lead one to investigate in society what Machiavelli calls the *verita effettuale*, the “effective truth” of empirical processes that have little to do with the idealized theoretical formulations employed in the social sciences (Flyvbjerg 2001, p. 145). Both Aristotle and modern day social sciences exhibit these blind spots. The following comparison is helpful in seeing the real challenges of human development:

Think of the difference between the decisions of a lumberjack and those of a general. When the lumberjack decides how to chop wood, he does not expect the wood to fight back; his environment is neutral. But when the general tries to cut down the enemy’s army, he must anticipate and overcome resistance to his plans (Dixit and Nalebuff 1991, p. 1).

The social sciences and development studies often “think” like the lumberjack. There are many problems with this, but one in particular means that corruption is insufficiently addressed. “Prudence [*phronesis*] is learned through the difficult task of actually trying to accomplish the good in messy circumstances” (Yuengert 2010, p. 50). These “messy circumstances” are intelligent and well-placed agents with privileged information and resources doing everything in their power (including large amounts of social capital among elites!) to maintain their privileges. It is surprising that the social sciences (especially economics), which should be working with an understanding of these messy circumstances, has operated so long with such naive assumptions (Sumner 2006).

The practice of corruption and effectively challenging it are both learned skills and thus domains of practical reason. Strategy for evil must be met with and countered by strategy for good. EO Churches could greatly benefit their societies, many of which are plagued by corruption, by playing a more visible role in its denouncement and encouraging active citizenship and public vigilance against this cancer. The Church can hold up models that resisted power such as St. John Chrysostom or Grigory Petrov, the Russian Reformer (Benz 1963, p. 154-55). However, even if most EO countries have a hard history behind

them, they also possess an understanding of *theosis* as *phronesis* or practical activity that can be tapped into.

Practical activity or *phronesis* is thus the *first* stage of the spiritual ascent in EO. Clarifying the nature of EO practical reason is important because practical reason also plays a central role in DS as will be seen later in this chapter. This first practical stage of the spiritual ascent however, gives rise to the second stage, characterized more by contemplation.

8.4.2 Natural Contemplation (Second stage of spiritual ascent)

Virtuous activity accustoms one to certain rational judgements that are not morally neutral, but partisan to human development. By loving one's Samaritan neighbour, one begins to see, to contemplate the shared aspects—those “others” which are in the human family. One begins to “see” something that was there all the time: every human shares the same nature and vulnerabilities and are part of the same human family or community of moral responsibility. So when Foucault writes, “Nothing in man—not even his body—is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men” (in Flyvbjerg 2001, p. 100), it is the role of practical reason and asceticism in Orthodoxy to develop this very stability that Foucault dismisses.

Thus if exercise in practical judgements is the first phase, this opens toward contemplation of the *logoi* within nature, the second phase. The perception or intuition of the *logoi* of contemplation in turn reinforce and confirm the practical decisions if they are in line with God's intentions—which are well-being for all. There is thus an action-learning cycle between the domains of practical reason and contemplative. Strictly speaking however, recognizing humanity's shared or species nature is an aspect of contemplative reason

because contemplative reason by definition concerns universal truths, i.e. species level properties. But, as emphasized above, action or *praxis* comes first: “We arrive at this state of contemplation of various objective truths, of the certain *logoi* of things, only after a long preparation of a pronounced moral character” (Staniloae 2003, p. 209). But with training and experience: “In time faith grows to a very brilliant evidence. But it grows in the measure we obey the commands and gain the virtues” (Staniloae 2003, p. 128). There is “truth or an objective sense in regard to everything. This is what is meant by the term *logos* used by St. Maximus and by other church Fathers” (Staniloae 2003, p. 209). Staniloae goes on to explain that truth is not subjective, varying from one to another, but virtuous action is required to achieve the gradual realization of this truth and the “rationalizing” of persons.

It is important to note the eco-logical basis for truth as contemplation. Distorted reason sees things in isolation: “it puts the general in service of the particular, hindering the normal development of the whole” (Staniloae 2003, p. 211), and both the particular and the whole (as well as relations of communion) have real ontological status. But “everything has in an objective way its own sense, as well as purpose—a cause, a finality, and a special relationship with everything else” (Staniloae 2003, p. 209). For humans, their “special relationship” is in the nature they already share, but this must be realized in greater measure through communion. This ecological perception of truth concerns the relationship to non-human nature as well. Staniloae’s volume two of his *Dogmatics* starts with a major section: “Human Solidarity with Nature” (Staniloae 2000). Nature, as a gift from a gracious God who is Tri-Unity, is already endowed with “dispositions for the good” of

communion and love and this is why “altruism” and lesser forms of practical reasoning can even be viewed in non-human nature (MacIntyre 1999; Burns 2006).¹⁶

Sin, or irrational reason, neglects to see the interconnected and interdependent aspects of existence and is thus a form of corruption, of viewing human nature in isolation from others and natural context. A principal role of the purified intellect and experience in judgement is the ability to see or contemplate things in their *intended* interrelatedness and wholeness, a wholeness that may not yet be actualized due to sin, neglect, apathy or simply underdevelopment. Contemplative reason is thus related to faith in God as a good and wise Creator. This means that faith optimistically intuits great possibilities lying dormant within nature—and as will be seen in the next chapter, faith of this sort is the first virtue. Contemplative reason can provide a vision of that wholeness that may not actually yet be, and provide motivation for virtuous action to bring about or restore this wholeness. Yet if this is not to degenerate into dangerous illusions, it must be examined by the person experienced in action and reflection, the *phronimos*.

Natural contemplation (this second stage—the first being practical reason) is mediated by creation and has to do with perceiving the *logoi*, the structures of creation or “the bundle of common attributes” that allow one to call something an essence or species (Staniloae 2003, p. 200). It also can be understood as reflection on the general principles, factors, or conditions of healthy human development in general. Returning to and further developing Staniloae’s example of linguistic development can be helpful here (Staniloae 2000, p. 35).

¹⁶ Balthasar quotes Maximus the Confessor in a section entitled “The Contemplation of Nature”:

God, the author of all visible nature, did not will it to move simply according to the laws of sense, but he scattered among all the species that comprise nature both intellectual meanings and the basic rules of moral behaviour; his purpose was that he might not only be praised loudly as Creator by dumb creatures, when the intelligible structure of the world points to him and announces his presence, but also that man might easily find the way of instruction that leads to him, being led upward by the laws and moral instructions that are hidden in visible things (in Balthasar 2003, p. 303).

It is beyond the scope of this research, but there is considerable effort to show what Maximus affirmed, that all species have “both intellectual meanings and the basic rules of moral behaviour” (Midgley 1984; 1995).

Linguistic *capacity* is within the domain of contemplative reason (*logoi*) inasmuch as it is a universal feature of the human essence. Literacy, however, stands with one foot, so to speak, in contemplative reason, and the other in practical reason. This is because literacy is both a universal capacity of human existence (an “instinct to learn, speak, and understand language” (Pinker 1994, p. 17)), but also requires effort for its development. Grammatical structures are hardwired (“language organs and grammar genes”) into all human brains; however, specific languages, language acquisition and mastery are not, and even less the composition of a particular poem. This recognition of the universal importance of literacy existing as a domain of natural contemplation, in turn, becomes a moral objective for practical reason—literacy’s increase. Language acquisition combines Being (or natural contemplation) with Well-being (or practical reason),¹⁷ and in the EO framework is a dimension of *theosis* or salvation *per se*. In all of this, it should be kept in mind that the domains of practical reason and natural contemplation can be entirely separated only in thought, not in concrete experience.

Discerning the *logoi* in nature (i.e. natural contemplation) includes in principle all developmental norms, even basic biological functions and norms, and the “external goods” necessary for their fulfilment, such as proper nutrition. Acceptable birth weights of babies can be considered “*logoi*” or natural norms within nature, as also can adequate quality and amounts of food to enable development. Nature gives signals and alarms (and part of science is greater sophistication in detecting these) where human functioning becomes threatened or injured, that is, has fallen below a level at which proper functioning is imperilled. This realm of natural contemplation includes these dimensions or thresholds and this in turn gives tasks for practical reason—including the importance of gathering good baseline information on health and other variables (Stewart 1989).

¹⁷ Comparing the analysis here with the Being, Well-being, and Eternal-being categories, contemplative reason corresponds largely to Being, while practical reason corresponds largely to Well-being.

Staniloae insists time and again that *theosis*, this “ascent to God”, cannot be achieved without the simultaneous development of intellectual, emotional, and other human powers. This second stage of natural contemplation involves the continued activation of human powers and virtues/*phronesis*, but in a more profound dialogue with, and a deeper understanding of, the principles or *logoi* of existence, taking into view more factors. Natural contemplation is thus a further necessary step of *theosis*: “there can be no bypassing the forms and laws of the cosmos on our way to God (Staniloae 2003, p. 205). And indeed, “to apprehend the *logoi*,¹⁸ is, in some form, to apprehend God” (Bradshaw 2004, p. 203). The objective *logoi*, not the subjective ones, serve the *general* development of humanity, “they are those which things in their healthy development move toward” (Staniloae 2003, p. 211). “God’s will, in other words ... follows the true line of the development of creation, in totality or of every fact in part” (Staniloae 2003, p. 209). EO theology can be understood in this light as the contemplation of the possibilities of nature, or of Being, but these as continuously unfolding under the influence of the dual commandment of love.

Practical wisdom (the first stage) and the contemplation of the *logoi* (the second stage) are, according to Staniloae, “two convergent peaks, which meet in love”. This “love” can be seen in that natural contemplation is also aesthetic and relational. Contemplation of nature is sensitive to the beauty within and between things and how these point beyond themselves: “the spirit of natural contemplation ... receives the proof of the creative Logos of all things from the beautiful order of visible things” (Staniloae 2003, p. 204). The “visible majesty of things” points to their origin in a loving Creator. The *logoi* point to the Logos just as unity and diversity in the human community points to the Trinity.

¹⁸ Staniloae believes that Thomistic Scholasticism follows a discursive reasoning (deductive method) as a way to “extract” the *logoi* from nature; Orthodoxy affirms a more intuitive method and one based on the previous stage of the purification of the irrational passions (Staniloae 2003, p. 206-7). There is debate however about the degree to which Aristotle and Thomas followed the deductive method or more of an inductive one (Hibbs 1988; 1991).

Science can be a form of worship inasmuch as the discovery of the *logoi* is viewed spiritually, that is, they are viewed as “a sign of His love in order to stimulate our love, in order to realize a dialogue of mutual commitment in love between us, God, and neighbour” (Staniloae 2003, p. 217).

This practical and natural knowledge however “give[s] birth to a higher, mystical knowledge of God, distinct from wisdom, or from the knowledge of him in the things of the world” (Staniloae 2003, p. 198). The account now turns to the third and final step, theological contemplation.

8.4.3 Theological Contemplation (Third phase of spiritual ascent):

Practical wisdom is the realm of human actions and quintessentially the virtues or *phronesis*. Natural contemplation, the second stage, comprehends the *logoi*, the structures and deeper intentions of creation, and creation as a pointer to God. This third stage, theological contemplation, is neither of these and is the “union of the soul with God, or of the vision of the divine light” (Staniloae 2003, p. 199). This third step is no longer concerned with the reasons of things (*logoi*) primarily within creation, nor with action, but communion with God directly. This aspect cannot be dealt with at length except to say that if theological contemplation is not a direct intuition of God’s essence, what is it?

In the “third heaven” or vision of God, the soul discovers not the intellectual essence of God, but experiences that which God conceived in his first intention—humans in perfect communion with God, their neighbours, and nature. The vision of God is an experience of ecstatic love. Staniloae quotes St. Isaac the Assyrian: “The love of God is warm by nature, and when it falls on someone without measure, it makes that soul ecstatic”; it is a “beverage for the soul” (Staniloae 2003, p. 308). It is the overwhelming sense, or better,

suprasensation of God's "personal" love. Love is a force which nourishes the spirit and body; it is not irrational as it comprehends all the *logoi*, but transcends them. Characteristic for his approach, Staniloae finds a human analogy to illustrate what he calls a "more interesting" take on this, quoting John Climacus of the Ladder: "If the [human] face of the one we love clearly and completely changes us and makes us radiant and content and happy, what will the Lord's face invisibly do when He comes..." (Staniloae 2003, p. 309). Apophaticism, or that which is beyond discursive reason, is a "plus" of knowledge beyond normal experience or concepts; it is not irrational or the negation of reason; it is suprarational in the same way that love is suprarational. Even the love of a human person is beyond concepts, beyond reason; all the more and to an infinite degree, God's love (Rogobete 1997, p. 94ff).

As mentioned, this "theological contemplation" comes only after a long journey of practical charity and contemplating the effects of this love for revealing the possibilities of the *logoi* in creation. Theological contemplation is not the starting point from which, once experienced, humans descend down into the world for service as was seen in Maritain. But at the same time, this ascent to the heights of theological contemplation does not do away with reason, science and practical activity; it involves them to their fullest extent, but extends further beyond their reach.

These three steps, practical reason, natural contemplation, and theological are another interpretive key for the doctrine of *theosis* in Orthodoxy. Of special importance for this thesis is the starting and decisive role of practical reason, or virtuous activity, or what Staniloae simply calls "doing" (Staniloae 2003, p. 70). Contemplation of nature emerges in tandem with this, which involves a movement from ignorance to knowledge of nature's laws and in turn the right use of the natural and social sciences, which is towards human development. But there is a price involved in this process: "only reason which is

modelled after the virtuous life, in other words after a life which has sacrificed, after prolonged exercise, egotism and the self-importance of personal opinion, can come to the truth” (Staniloae 2003, p. 212).

8.5 Practical Reasoning in the Capability Approach

It can be fruitful here given the overall nature of this project, to compare now Orthodoxy’s approach to rationality with Amartya Sen’s and the CA. While this might seem odd, there are indeed some similarities, and especially of moral ends, for Sen is pre-eminently concerned about human development and a form of practical rationality appropriate to that. In a major work entitled, significantly for his approach, *Freedom and Rationality*, Sen defines rationality as “the discipline of subjecting one’s choices—of actions as well as objectives, values and priorities—to reasoned scrutiny” (Sen 2002, p. 4). He points out that “the demands of reasoned scrutiny are exacting, even when one does the scrutiny oneself”. Scrutiny is not to be confused with uncritical rumination to confirm one’s instincts and ‘gut reactions’” and thus rationality involves “disciplined freedom” (p. 49). Freedom requires rationality and rationality requires discipline. Sen notes however that there is no sure-fire test for rationality, and, similar to *phronesis*, one must rely on “our reasoned understanding of close connections between conduct and consequences in a ‘vast variety of circumstances’” (p.50). Rationality is for Sen “a complex discipline, rather than seeing it as a mechanical application of a set of simple formulas” (p.49). Succinctly put, Sen singles out two values, freedom and reason, shows their interdependence and relates these to human development objectives.

Aspects of this are similar to Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy views theology (not in the technical third sense above, but in the broader sense) as a form of practical reasoning that has neighbour love, or human development, as its aim. While Orthodoxy values freedom, and

rationality, and would agree that rationality is a necessary discipline and for similar moral ends (human development), and with similar qualifications, however, there is a “missing link” between freedom and reason that makes Sen’s account appear unsatisfying. The contrast with Orthodoxy can be seen most clearly where Sen argues for “Dependence on the person’s own reasoning”, which means, the “non-imposition of externally dictated tests” on the “discipline of self-assessment and reasoning” (Sen 2002, p. 49).¹⁹ Sen’s approach (with his own interlocutors primarily in economics) is allocating a broader scope to “other regarding” behaviour in that the “externally dictated tests” are artificial criteria of utility maximization. However, Sen’s approach, while giving the possibility of a broader range of individual motivations and reasons for acting than rational-choice theory, is still highly individualistic in that anything “external” seems to be an infringement upon freedom and rationality as Sen defines it. Sen appears to be rearticulating modernity’s commitment to an “egocentric starting point” (Macmurray 1961). Thus, Sen’s answer to the Biblical question of “whether or not everybody is his brother’s keeper” (Wilson 1990, p. 188) can never be a definitive yes or no, but only that each person has to answer this question for herself.²⁰

This approach to rationality can be contrasted with Staniloae’s which embeds the self and her aspirations (and thus freedom and rationality) in a larger context to give fuller meaning and strength to *both* of these values:

The order of meanings is not the product of the human psyche nor does it end with the products of the psyche. For this order imposes itself on us without our willing it, and through the aspiration it instils in us, surpasses our own psychic possibilities. But the order of meanings imposes itself as a personal horizon, infinite and superior to man, and it requires man’s freedom

¹⁹ Sen does seem to allow one external test, even on the formation of individual values, and that is democracy as public reason (Sen 2009, p. 336).

²⁰ Paul Ricoeur argues, on the other hand, that “the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other” (Ricoeur 1992, p. 3). Ricoeur offers many important arguments, but a critical one is the “constitution of a shared nature, that is, of an intersubjectively founded nature” (Ricoeur 1992, p. 322).

if he is to have a share in that order. Even during man's earthly existence, the order of meanings does call upon him to participate in itself in freedom (Staniloae 1994, p. 8).

For Staniloae, the order of meanings or reason *precedes*, but draws forth human freedom and human freedom contributes to and enhances nature's order. But nature's preceding order is not merely impersonal or timeless laws, but is Creativity and Personhood-in-Communion. Only conceived in this way can the preceding Divine Order enhance, and not discourage, human freedom, creativity, and communion.

For Sen, rationality is, to put it bluntly, too much inside the head of *one* person, too insularly separated from others and nature.²¹ As is evident in this quote, Staniloae values freedom and rationality, but there is a larger communal and personal context for these valued human functions that elicits and draws forth freedom, creativity, and human development. This is the question of providing a context for rationality appropriate for human development, which includes, but goes far beyond "dependence on the person's own reasoning". This provides a more normative (ontological) context for rationality as a set of factors both (internal and external to the person) linking agency to human development concerns. It can also mean more epistemological humility. Even Aristotle recognized "The bounty of nature is clearly beyond our control" (Aristotle 2004, p. 278), which includes persons' powers of reason. Humans are participants or guests in a larger rationality, a larger order of meanings that require the exercise of freedom and the discipline of rational scrutiny, but in more ways, within more contexts, and for more reasons than Sen's theory would probably allow.

²¹ John Dewey, himself a liberal but of the non-Kantian type, saw this problem of the growing importance of the isolation and abstraction of the individual from community and context. He notes that "the effect was to isolate the individual from his connections with his fellows and with nature, and thus to create an artificial human nature ... It shut out from view the forces which really move human nature" (Dewey 1957, p. 294).

In this light, it can be argued that EO expresses a view of the human person and a cosmic context for the exercise of freedom and rationality (Sen's Enlightenment values) that makes human development outcomes potentially more plausible, more reliably derived. It offers a fuller set of reasons for a form of rationality relevant for human development to be truly imperative and not merely the "projections of subjects" (Taylor 1993, p. 212). And it offers a methodology, the virtues, for persons to become agents of development.

But there is another side to Sen's practical reasoning that deserves highlighting, and is analytically distinct from his Enlightenment individualism. As has been mentioned, Sen develops a theory of justice that focuses on removing or reducing remediable injustices, and that action for justice need not wait until all can come to a consensus on what perfect justice looks like. This is the aspect of Sen's theory that merits salvaging even if it must be noted that while this part of Sen's theory can *orientate* justice concerns, it cannot *create* them (Deneulin 2011). And as will be seen in the next chapter, Sen's approach to justice as remedying burdens has an ancestral theological analogue.

However, beyond Sen, there are further conversations within the CA concerning practical reason. As seen earlier, practical reason has an architectonic role in Nussbaum's list (along with sociability) meaning that these distinctively human capabilities should suffuse the more primitive capabilities such as food and shelter. And for Nussbaum, these distinctively human capabilities contain their own imperatives for fulfilment (Nussbaum 2002, p. 131). However, as mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, an alternative approach to natural law, developed by John Finnis and colleagues, emerged in Catholicism to address the deficiencies of neo-scholasticism.²² This approach has been linked with the capability approach by Sabina Alkire (Alkire and Black 1997; Alkire 2002; 2002) and will now be briefly examined.

²² According to Finnis, "a study of the nature of a being is ... a study of the potentialities or capacities of that being" (Finnis 1980, p. 90).

Alkire contends that instead of starting from an already given and therefore perhaps paternalistic list of human functions—Nussbaum is accused of this in terms of her “list” (Jaggar 2006)—the core dimensions of human development can be derived through an exercise in practical reason alone. The basic dimensions of human development can be determined by iterations of the question “Why do I do what I do?” which is to say, sustained reflection on the various ends of the actions humans initiate. Sufficient reflection on this question will show that all persons take actions and make plans to fulfil a finite set of basic human dimensions or functions. Thus intentional reflection on why humans do and plan what they do “yields substantive, objective descriptions of dimensions of human flourishing while preserving a space for historical, cultural, and personal specification” (Alkire 2002, p. 44). The result of this process is a list similar to others and includes life, work, play, friendship, knowledge and appreciation of beauty, and includes spirituality or transcendence defined as “harmony with some more than human source of meaning or value”.

As a method for teasing out the most basic reasons for acting, there are, however, several problems. First, the process is highly intellectual and abstracted. Persons do not act out of a regard for abstract notions of friendship, but they act in response and in relationship with concrete persons, actual friends. Second, other less “rational” but powerful motivators of action are not on the list such as “honour”, of which there are both universal and culturally specific features (Bowman 2006, p. 6). Third, the asking of questions is not value free especially if one has a list already in mind. A development expert assessing the success or failure of a project to achieve certain dimensions could ask questions until the right answer was given. And this would not be a challenging task given the dimensions’ highly abstract nature. Lastly, people just don’t live this way of repeatedly asking “why” any more than persons make decisions behind Rawls’ “veil of ignorance”. Despite assertions to the contrary (Alkire 2002, p. 46), this practical reasoning approach *is* highly theoretical.

Still, similar to Nussbaum's list, there is some value for abstracting and clarifying the "what" of development—what everyone works for if they are rationally consistent and not self-destructive (which are major assumptions of the approach). But this "what" question neglects the more explicitly ethical question: practical reason exercised on behalf of whom (cf. the fourth question of Flyvbjerg above)? Is practical reason to fulfil basic dimensions of well-being exercised only on behalf of oneself? This is a clear possibility seen in the fact that these valuable dimensions are asserted *not* to be virtues; they are pre-moral (Alkire and Black 1997, p. 268). Thus it seems that they are simply descriptive of what persons actually do when they exercise agency, or practical reason, and not what they should or should not do. However, if these "pre-moral" dimensions are to be used as a guide for development theory, then, for their wider fulfilment (i.e. for more persons having these valuable dimensions fulfilled), this "pre-moral", non-virtue side of practical reasoning dimensions must be completed with the "pro-moral", virtue side of practical reasoning, and particularly the virtue of justice. Otherwise one is left with a nice list of valuable human dimensions, but no obligation for their wider fulfilment. This is also to say that an agreed upon set of desirable dimensions of shared human nature does not automatically or even readily translate into a "common good", a basis for ethical responsibility for the other. Unlike Alkire however, Nussbaum treats these core dimensions as already *moral*; they *demand* universal fulfilment. But where this "demand" comes from and why it is or is not experienced and acted upon, is among the *most* vital questions for human development. It seems that one strength of Alkire's approach then is that it separates these two questions (the existence of valuable dimensions, and the sources of moral duty or inspiration for their fulfilment), whereas Nussbaum's approach fuses and perhaps occludes this valuable distinction.

A theory of valuable dimensions that grounds itself in will or agency *alone* as does the practical reasoning approach—and not in controversial notions of shared human nature or

communitarian values—will have difficulty transmuting individual agency into human solidarity. A practical reasoning approach needs the moral and spiritual virtues and it seems that the Finnis/Alkire approach itself recognizes this. It can be religion's special role to develop and guide agency towards these other regarding virtues, that is, to traverse the bridge between practical reason for self and practical reason exercised on behalf of the vulnerable other.

Here it is important to mention that it is not desirable for theology to be obsessively seeking to uncover or provide different facts about human nature than secular accounts (the closeness of grace and nature can obviate this for Orthodoxy). Theology can however, place these facts in a larger narrative and spiritual context that shapes persons, strengthens them and provides *meaning* and thus an increased sense of responsibility. This is a return to the “Why” question of human development, and it is fundamental. Staniloae notes that “The acuteness of this responsibility demonstrates that it is based on a responsibility toward a supreme Personal reality who is the creator of nature and of human beings” (Staniloae 2000, p. 2). Secular theories cannot easily generate this “acuteness of responsibility”, and where they do, they have often ended up tragically idolizing a portion of humanity and sacrificing the rest.

Orthodoxy is different though in many regards to a social science approach, including the practical reasoning approach—a difference that is a complementary strength. Social science approaches reflect on what everyone, everywhere putatively needs to be fully human, whether these are basic needs, or activating certain capacities of the human person, or removing remediable injustices. Social science aims to present a picture of human well-being and the varied dimensions thereof and find a non controversial starting point that everyone can agree on. There is value in this approach for theology and it can be part of discovering the *logoi* within creation, and developing bases for development action and

cooperation across traditions. Furthermore, the agency guiding aspects of religion need to be informed by constant critical dialogue with the sciences and reflection on “nature’s norms” even if it is also (paradoxically perhaps) recognized that nature’s norms cannot always be properly perceived or developed by looking at nature “as is”.

This reflection can provide a backdrop for Orthodox virtues in relation to human development: they are less trying to map out the discrete dimensions of human nature and more aimed at a methodology for getting humanity back on track towards *philanthropia*, love of humankind. Orthodoxy can be seen as a conversion and strengthening of practical reason to work for human development.

Theosis in Orthodoxy is “therapeutic” (Greek for healing), which means it is a method for a return to health, not just for the individual, but the entire human family. It recognizes that humans have, in a sense, lost their way—a fact which development studies presuppose. Aristotle calls medicine an exemplary of practical reason. It is the exercise of human action and deliberation for an agreed upon end: a return to physical health (Aristotle 2004, p. 57). Similarly, for the realm of the human composite (body and spirit), Orthodox virtues are about the activation and rehabilitation of the principles of good or healthy existence not merely for oneself, but for all. Staniloae calls following the virtues/*logoi*, the “steps of this healing” (Staniloae 2003, p. 213) and this—in that Christ embodied all the virtues as the steps toward healing and human reunification—shows why the Incarnation is viewed as central to the unity of humankind.

To conclude, this chapter has delineated several “meta-ethical” features of Orthodoxy’s way of approaching the virtues in preparation for the next chapter where individual virtues, their sequencing and priorities, will be detailed. This chapter has shown primarily two things: a) the non-separation of the natural and supernatural virtues and b) the priority of

practical reason to contemplative reason, of *praxis* to *theoria*. These two features are another way of analyzing two themes running through this thesis. The first is that grace and nature, theology and human development, stand in a very close relation. Salvation or *theosis* is an elevation of natural capacities and this places salvation in a direct overlap with the categories of human or “capability development”. The second has been to show how the Orthodox approach to practical reason can enrich, but also be enriched by, development studies. Both approaches have value, DS primarily by reflecting on the universal dimensions of human development and the removal of injustices, EO as a therapeutic method aiming at the well-being of all.

9. ORTHODOX VIRTUES, SYNERGY, & SALVATION HISTORY

This final chapter has two aims. The first is to outline the specific Orthodox virtues, show their already existing relevance for human development, and explore new connections. Then the virtue of love will receive extended treatment, especially in terms of the communitarian/cosmopolitan debate, balancing the competing claims between special relations such as family/Church, and duties to the distant. The second aim of this chapter is to counterbalance the admittedly one-sided emphasis on human agency so far, and underscore the role of Divine agency or God's work in *theosis* and how it is coordinated with human's work in a way that respects agency and promotes human development. EO names this Divine-human cooperation "synergy", or shared action and imitating the virtues of Christ is central to this.¹ The EO doctrine of synergy illustrates how human development is incorporated into the story of salvation itself, but priority is still given to the Divine initiative, for "God's love wakes up ours".

9.1 Select Orthodox virtues

The standard list of Orthodox virtues, gathered largely from Maximus, but modified somewhat in Staniloae's delineation are: "faith, fear of God, repentance, self control or restraint, patience and longsuffering, hope, dispassion and love" (Staniloae 2003, p. 123). The account here will examine only faith, repentance, and fear of God to give a few signposts on the journey, and then jump ahead to love, the summit of the virtues. It is always to be remembered that even though Orthodoxy emphasises ethical effort in *theosis*,

¹ Staniloae rarely uses the term "imitation of Christ" because of its Western connotations. He notes "It is not only an imitation of Christ as in the West" (Staniloae 2003, p. 26). This has to do with the fact that participating in Christ is participating also in the "Divine energies", which will be further discussed below. Staniloae's preferred language is "cleansing of the passions and winning of the virtues" (Staniloae 2003, p. 21ff).

“as the human being’s model, the Son of God himself, by becoming man, takes upon himself the task of the spiritualizing of the human being” (Staniloae 2000, p. 122-123). However, in this advance in virtue “our personal reality remains free in relation to this higher being. Such a relationship is analogous to the relationship of one person to another in which the liberty of both is preserved” (Staniloae 1994, p. 10).

However, before delineating the Orthodox virtues, it should be noted that in general, Orthodoxy often expresses very positive views about the presence of virtues outside of the Church. Staniloae does not dwell on this theme, but does say “in practice, many people live in a way that accords with this meaning [i.e. offered by supernatural revelation], and when they do not, they feel guilty for not taking it into account”; but Staniloae notes that rarely does anyone grasp with full clarity or certainty the truth (Staniloae 1994, p. 18). Other Orthodox theologians, however, are even more sanguine about virtues outside the specific Christian or Orthodox community. Here is an extended passage by Father Thomas Hopko from a textbook for theological education. The value of this passage is that it illustrates in an unparalleled way the idea that virtues are universal human powers, and that they are not owned by Orthodoxy alone:

[The] fruits of the Spirit often called virtues ... which literally means those powers and possessions of the mind and the heart which all men should have if they are truly human, fulfilling themselves as created in the image and likeness of God ... It has been said, and it is true, that the Christian virtues are not all particularly "Christian" in the sense that only Christians know about them and are committed to attain them. Most, if not all, of the Christian virtues have been honoured, respected and recommended by all great teachers of the spiritual life. This in no way detracts from their Christian value and truth, for Christ and His apostles and saints have not taught and practiced something other than that which all men should teach and practice. As the fulfilment of all positive human aspirations and desires, it is quite understandable that Jesus Christ, the perfect "man from heaven" and "final Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45-47; Romans 5:14) should fulfil and realize in himself that which all men of wisdom and good-will have sought for and desired in their minds and hearts, enlightened by God (Hopko 1976, p. 53).

This passage illustrates perfectly the closeness of grace and nature which means an overlapping consensus is possible between Orthodoxy and other traditions. This feature of Orthodoxy being noted, the Orthodox sequence of virtues can be given.

In EO *theosis* or salvation is seen less as event and more as journey. But as with any great journey one has not yet embarked upon, one must *believe* that there is a safe passage and a worthwhile destination in order to take those first steps. Just as believing that God is love requires faith, so working for the value of human life on earth is not something that can be logically proven—it must be first believed, or better, committed to.² Thus faith is the first virtue. That life has meaning beyond human projections, even Kant with his insistence on autonomy maintained; he was not arguing for a cosmically orphaned universe (Schneewind 1998, p. 378). This faith is the ground of development ideals; it is the belief that there is a better “something” than current empirical actualities. But faith is not just belief, it is faithfulness, it is action and commitment; it is taking those first steps. Secular reason can almost never provide the basis for difficult action upon ideals and this is an important difference vis-à-vis Sen and Nussbaum.³ Indeed, faith is a way to stabilize reason in a firm position (Staniloae 2003, p. 122). Faith is a natural virtue. Tocqueville puts this point beautifully and his thought is worth mentioning in a dialogue between East and West as he is one of the few Western social scientists who affirm the naturalness of faith for the human condition:

Religion is thus one particular form of hope so natural to the human heart as hope itself. Men cannot detach themselves from religious beliefs except by some wrong-headed thinking and by a sort of moral violence inflicted upon their true nature; they are drawn

² The sense of worth of human life is an innate “moral sense” that, like any other native virtues requires development and shaping (Wilson 1993).

³ Nussbaum in an article on the virtues ends with philosophy as “placing our hope in reason” (Nussbaum 1999). Orthodoxy (and much of Christianity) values reason and even places hope in reason, but views these within the framework of the goodness of God and the proper exercise of His gifts, one of which is reason. Nussbaum does believe that emotions are suffused with a moral rationality which seems to imply a very positive view of creation.

back by an irresistible inclination. Unbelief is an accident; faith is the only permanent state of mankind (Tocqueville 2003, p. 347).

Faith, however, is not the start of a journey of blind commitments that receives no verification from within human experience itself. This is because faith's aim is not mere belief in an external revelation, but is acting on the good intentions/*logoi* that God has placed *within* existence. But one must take that first step sometimes based not on knowledge and evidence coming from one's own experience, but from faith, from testimony, and from others' experience. Faith is the mother of the virtues; it is a purposive disposition to act in accordance with the good, in the belief that God and creation are good. And the practice of the virtues, launched by faith, is, in turn the midwife of true knowledge.

Faith launches a commitment, a set of actions, namely the keeping of the commandments or loving God through one's neighbour. Staniloae expands his explanation of this and offers a five step process: 1) faith, which has of yet little evidence for its convictions; 2) a commitment to virtues and the gaining of experience; 3) confirmation and refinement of experience and subtlety in judgments gained; 4) increased development of judgement, entering the higher realms of *phronesis*, and; 5) more holistic and rapid judgement, on the basis of an integrated vision of the truth in everything. This is akin to the aforementioned "experiential learning" or "action learning" process which is rooted in the Aristotelian tradition. The modern champion of this approach is John Dewey (Dewey 1897; 1934; 1957; 1961; 1963; Rockefeller 1991).⁴

⁴ Both of these statements by Dewey could be vintage Staniloae:

I would suggest that the future of religion is connected with the possibility of developing a faith in the possibilities of human experience and human relationships that will create a vital sense of the solidarity of human interests and inspire action to make that sense a reality ... [and] True religion, they taught, is experimental religion; one comes to a genuine understanding of saving truth by embodying it and testing it in action (Rockefeller 1991, pp. 449, 549).

“Faith is the virtue for starting our journey. It is the stream which is joined by those of the other virtues ... In love all the virtues are gathered” (Staniloae 2003, p. 128). Faith is the beginning of the virtues, but other virtues such as self-control in turn strengthen faith (Staniloae 2003, p. 124). Faith is important and necessary because reason has “slipped” from its natural position in an intellectual-voluntary act, and must be restored similarly. Thus faith involves the belief in intellectual concepts such as the goodness of God and thus the goodness of creation, but it also involves the voluntary dimensions, the willingness and determination to orientate one’s life toward the good. This intellectual-voluntary act is the beginning of the purification of the “mud” that dims reality and diminishes reason’s effectiveness. In time “faith grows to a very [sic] brilliant evidence”.⁵ Faith can bring an added “plus” of conviction to certain truths, or even new truths which reason could in principle have known, but had not grasped. Faith is a complex phenomenon and depends on the will, internal and external evidence, but also support from God’s power. But most important is that faith involves a commitment to trust in and act upon the goodness of God and the related belief that God only desires good for humankind.

The next virtue after faith is *fear of God*. “The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge”, the book of Proverbs begins. Faith which has not reached fear or is not “accompanied from the beginning by fear hasn’t gained a high enough degree of efficiency to lead to action” (Staniloae 2003, p. 130). Faith, to be led to action must be an effective faith, a faith that is strongly enough motivated to act. This notion of the fear of God as an aid to action might not be agreeable to some, but there is a wisdom here that shows that Orthodoxy, while more optimistic than much Western theology (Kelly 1978, p. 349), is not utopian. Fear of God “makes us active agents, instead of passive puppets” (Staniloae 2003, p. 130); that is, the stakes are perceived to be high for indifference. But Staniloae’s

⁵ It is important to note that for Orthodoxy, faith is born, or the seed for faith is “won or strengthened at Baptism” (Staniloae 2003, p. 124). But Baptism itself has the role of strengthening human nature in line with God’s good intentions, the *logoi* within existence.

analysis of fear is more sophisticated still, relating it to the fear of falling into the “automatism” of sin, of failing to live up to the development of one’s possibilities and spiritual character. This fear of God is tied closely to a sense of moral responsibility both for one’s own development, but also others: “We can’t just do anything...” or nothing (Staniloae 2003, p. 132). Important here is that the fear of God is initially a goad for motivation and improvement, of not sinking into a mere animal like existence; not being a passive cog in the machinery of nature.⁶ Fear of God is not a fear of arbitrary acts of judgment, but failure to develop oneself and shared human nature properly.

Faith intuitively “something better”;⁷ *repentance*, the next virtue, does as well. But the virtue of repentance is connected to regret for what one has done wrong, or left undone. Without this, a true development orientation is impossible. St. Isaac (Staniloae notes) calls repentance the highest of the virtues because it is the means of continual perfection. “Repentance is the critical act of the conscience; it is the self criticism which man makes” (Staniloae 2003, p. 137). It is plausible that one of the weaknesses of development studies can be a neglect of self-criticism and focusing excessively on structural/systemic issues, and neglecting the “politics of personal transformation (Tessman 2005). However, a characteristic failure on the side of theology involves a lack of social criticism and addressing structural injustices. Staniloae writes: “repentance expresses the thought, ‘It can be better’” (Staniloae 2003, p. 138). Notice he did not merely say, “I” can be better. The “it”, is the total situation. This implies both internal conditions, the state of one’s soul, but also external conditions, socio-economic structures. This aspect Marx got right, that what is not needed is simply more exacting critical rationality (Kant), but the necessity for structural transformation (Gibellini 1987, p. 26).

⁶ This indeed was the aim of Communist habituation, to form “Cogs in the Wheel” (Heller 1988).

⁷ Martin Seligman, pioneer of the aforementioned Positive Psychology movement, notes that “the notion of potential, without the notion of optimism, has very little meaning” (Seligman 2006, p. 154).

Structural sin, the most obvious example of which is Apartheid in South Africa, is a clear situation that demands structural-level repentance (Gruchy 1995). In Staniloae's Romania, the Church's "collaboration" with the Communists is one arena where structural repentance has been called for, though in a more morally complicated context. This is why "the average Romanian was willing to overlook the Church's past political conformism" (Stan and Turcescu 2000, p. 1471). Despite these ambiguities, there is however the unambiguous moral damage left by Communism. As anthropologist David Kideckel writes:

the socialist system, though ostensibly designed to create new persons motivated by the needs of groups and of society as a whole, in fact created people were of necessity self-centred, distrustful, and apathetic to the very core of their beings (Kideckel 1993, p. xiii).

The Church (as all other institutions) is not unaffected by this legacy and, like much of Romanian society, was left unprepared to deal with it. There is an inadequacy of structures, educational and otherwise to develop the virtues, and there is a lack of virtues to challenge or develop the structures. The interdependent nature of these challenges for reform should not be lost, a challenge which itself is not lost on the virtue framework.

But repentance should not be thought of as merely correction of mistakes or sins. Repentance is also the gadfly for progress: "On the one hand it is an unceasing dissatisfaction with whatever state we are in, on the other, it is a steady and unwavering trust in giant possibilities"; it "urges man toward the better", and it is the motor of the other virtues. It is a fire burning, "which maintains the tension for the better" (Staniloae 2003, p 139-40). Notice how Staniloae links repentance to human solidarity:

Repentance does not mean an isolated life, but one which involves to the highest degree the common destiny of the community. It can contribute in great measure to the realization of a more brotherly world; it gradually overcomes egotism and increases the assets of love. It can contribute in an important way to the bringing about of a real, inner and lasting solidarity between the members of the human community (Staniloae 2003, p. 144).

Repentance has a rational role as well. It permits one to “hear an objective, external judgement on our deeds”, neither too merciful nor too condemning. Tears can “wash the window of the soul,” cleansing the dirt and softening a hardness of heart and “opening to it the perspective of God and neighbour” (Staniloae 2003, p. 146).

Staniloae continues in a similar manner with the rest of the virtues: self-control, the guarding of the mind, longsuffering, hope, meekness, and dispassion. It is easy to see, given the way Staniloae develops each virtue, that they are not to be domesticated into mere personal piety. For Staniloae, the virtues are about social transformation, not merely “the narrow path of personal virtue and personal salvation” (Benz 1963, p. 155). Much more can be done to develop these tendencies, but the theological foundation for advancing these concerns is already in place.

9.2 *Agape*: communitarian (ecclesial) and cosmopolitan

Instead of continuing to detail each virtue, the account will now vault ahead to love, which is the *telos* of the virtues. The account will focus primarily on finding a balance between the competing claims of duties to “special relations” such as family and Church, and duties to “distant others”. In other words, aspects of the liberal-communitarian debate will be revisited. But first, a few extended quotes will be offered to convey Staniloae’s lyrical sensibilities concerning the summit of all virtues:

Love is the exit from the magic and illusory circle of egotism, a circle which I extend to the infinite, as in a delusive dream. It is a breaking out into true relationship, in communion with others. It is an exit from the shadowy prison of the ego and the entrance into the life of the community, of solidarity, into the kingdom of love, which includes everyone (Staniloae 2003, p. 142).

Notice that love is universal—it includes everyone. As will be seen later, this is, perhaps surprisingly, not always the case in Christian theology and even by preeminent

theologians. One more extended passage is offered that combines a number of the virtues and culminates in love:

It is clear that no one can approach or enter this kingdom, this paradise, unless he leaves behind the ocean of numberless sirens of egotism which try to attract him as so many violent waves ... At every step, we must struggle with all our might, to go on safe and sound and to arrive as another Odysseus in our true land. Rowing powerfully, our muscles are made stronger and our course continually easier ... By repentance God doesn't let us be satisfied with what we already are, but always calls us to go on; yes even more, it doesn't leave us in the darkness of egotism, but it calls us to the expanses of solidarity in love (Staniloae 2003, p. 142).

Staniloae writes that the “great mystery of love” is that it is the deepest and most profound union possible between two subjects, but “without their dissolution as free subjects” (Staniloae 2003, p. 310). Staniloae, perhaps more than any other modern Orthodox thinker—and this undoubtedly because of his experience under communism—stresses the fact that the person as a moral end must be kept intact. “The person does not exist for the sake of anything else, but all things exist for him” (Staniloae 1994, p. 130).⁸

Love is both natural and supernatural simultaneously, illustrated in the fact that Orthodoxy does not stress the distinction between *eros* and *agape* (Moss 2010). But of course there has to be some difference, something that grace adds to human experience or there is no point in theology. This is indeed so, but first of all, it is important to stress that human love exists in a state of continuity, not utter discontinuity, with God's love. Natural love indeed is often fickle, unstable, often overcome by the irrational and unnatural passions, overcome by partiality; but love as a virtue means actual human love and sympathies are stabilized, rendered more firm both in their intensity, and extensity; love becomes a

⁸ Especially relevant here in this section, Silviu Rogobete analyzed Staniloae's theology under the helpful title of an “Ontology of Love”, and God as the Supreme Personal Reality, including the Trinity as the structure of supreme love (Rogobete 1997). Many of Rogobete's emphases are similar to those here, including the closeness of natural and supernatural revelation. However, this present study has tried to bring out more fully the role of shared nature in Staniloae's Trinitarian theological anthropology (that Rogobete analyzes under the broader category of ontology) and thus the cosmopolitan base of moral obligation required for human development.

“blessed passion” and the passions are to be “educated, not eradicated” (Ware 1998, p. 116). Love as a natural theological virtue is aided by grace, but it is *aided*; love grows *by self efforts* and through these efforts love grows firm, stable, and expands with Christ serving as the moral exemplum. “True love for any neighbour, the love which never fails, can’t be born without prayer and without asceticism to purify the passions” (Staniloae 2003, p. 319).

Love “is a capacity to affect a unity, an alliance” (Staniloae 1994, p. 239). Previously it was seen that a union can be designated loving only when the union does not dissolve the one into the other. Love is “the movement full of longing on two sides”. On the human level (modelled on the Trinity), “There is a unity of human nature that needs to be made manifest in the unity (or better harmony) of human wills” (Staniloae 1994, p. 253). In the divine-human relationship there is also reciprocity; the human side is not merely a passive object of God’s longing and love. God’s love for humanity expressed in the gifts of creation, providence, and his outgoing love in Christ is such that he “makes himself worthy of their love and thus actions that produce the love of creatures for him” (Staniloae 1994, p. 242).

But eventually the question of questions must be squarely faced: *which* others; which neighbours are within the circle of Christian love? In the Gospels, a fundamental question in the background of the giving of the two great commandments is “Who is my neighbour?” Should special relations such as family be seen as less virtuous in favour of a more universal, impartial love? Or, should there be a special kind of love inside the Christian Church that is not shared with those outside? If virtues need community, then what is the “location” of the virtues? Staniloae does not give clear answers to all of these questions. In certain writings, Staniloae advocated a communitarian type of love in the form of a spiritual nationalism (Staniloae 2004). In his later major works, such as the

Dogmatics, he backs off almost entirely from this, emphasizing the universal nature of love as seen above. The overall tendency in major Orthodox thinkers is the same, a cosmopolitan or universal love probably out of fears of the immanent heresy of “phyletism” (Benz 1963, p. 212).⁹ With this in mind, the following section will clarify the communitarian-cosmopolitan position that is not clearly developed by Staniloae, but is important for linking EO with human development.

Earlier it was intimated that a love that takes no regard for special relations whatsoever can be irresponsible, and even destructive (Midgley 1983). But on the other hand, a love that does not strain towards the universal would appear to be sub-Christian. It is instructive that many of the themes encountered previously under the guise of the liberal vs. communitarian debate are paralleled in theological debates about the nature of love. These opposing positions will be briefly developed.

First, there is the position that Christian love is strictly cosmopolitan in nature. This position tends to separate “mere” human *eros* that is characterized by partiality, special relations, mutuality, or other sullyng features, from its divine opposite, *agape*. This position has the merits of extensity and equality, and it seeks to model the Biblical (and Kantian) emphasis on universality and to overcome impartialities and biases. The following is a touchstone: “Regard is for every person *qua* human existent, to be distinguished from those special traits, actions, etc., which distinguish particular personalities from each other” (Outka 1977, p. 9). There are these tendencies in Staniloae and the focus on the human shared essence fits this type of ethical reasoning which is clearly in the New Testament. The danger with this tendency however, if taken by itself,

⁹ “Phyletism” is an exaggerated spiritual nationalism that goes beyond simple patriotism. It is a permanent danger of Orthodoxy “which permitted each nation its own language, constitution and ecclesiastical autonomy. Thus the development of the Church was intimately connected with the development of the state...” (Benz 1963, p. 212).

can be to neglect the role of special relations in the family, community, and Church. This is similar to Western liberal style cosmopolitanism and is influenced by a Kantian sensibility “where the familial is more or less ignored” (Post 1990, p. 34) and abstraction reigns supreme.

However, on the “communitarian” side, there is the argument that love requires a *special* company and love seeks and requires reciprocity/mutuality within a finite set of bounds (Post 1990). Love’s seeds cannot be sown and flower in any soil; virtue must be practiced in a fertile context, with shared values in a bounded community to achieve its distinctive properties. Love has “familiar” properties and it cannot be extended infinitely or it will lose its special features and be diluted. Karl Barth serves (for illustrative purposes) as a Weberian “ideal-type” for the communitarian position:¹⁰

There can be no question of an extension in principle of the concept of Christian love for the neighbour into a universal love of humanity, unless we are to radically weaken and confuse it (Barth 1958, p. 807).

Barth is here talking about *agape* as the special love shown by God to, and between, those who are on the inside, who live under the “sign of baptism”, who are part of the history of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*). Thus, the neighbour to be loved “is always the fellow-man who encounters and is united with me in the context of the history of salvation” (Barth 1958, p. 808).

This circle of the covenant community is not “hermetically sealed”, people are invited to join, but notice the following:

¹⁰ Weberian “ideal-types” are theoretical constructs, not necessarily existing in reality, to illustrate certain tendencies in their thoroughgoing, “pure”, form. Using these passages of Barth here is relevant inasmuch as he exhibits with clarity a “communitarian” tendency that can exist in any religious expression, including the aforementioned “phyletism” of Orthodoxy, a position that Staniloae seemed to embrace early on (Neamtu 2006). See next footnote for a qualification of this description of Barth.

It may sound harsh at first, but we have to note that neither the Old Testament nor the New speaks of a love for man as such and therefore for all men; of a universal love of humanity (Barth 1958, p. 802).

Barth, in these passages,¹¹ represents the clearest expression of this communitarian approach—of a view of Christian love that is limited by salvation history; *agape* is for those who exist within the covenant community and partake in its realities.

However, the position advanced here, and one that appears to be both more Biblical and required for human development, is a combination of the communitarian and cosmopolitan positions. It is an emphasis on salvation history which constitutes a new covenant community, but which also instructs its members to extend the range of love outward, as in the Samaritan parable. This extension of love outward beyond the borders of the community is a, if not *the*, principle quality of the covenant itself. Here it is necessary to demonstrate the much neglected scriptural basis for the “communitarian-cosmopolitan” argument in the New Testament, and then show how this framework can address overly simplistic interpretations of ethical obligation.

The communitarian view of Christian love (articulated with absolute clarity by Barth, but seen in Hauerwas previously) requires “a small, intimate group grounded in special historical transactions” (Post 1990, p. 102). “Solidarity in Christ is what ‘we’ share, and this distinguishes ‘us’ from ‘them’” (Horrell 2005, p. 18). Significantly however, one Biblical text that is used as a key passage for a communitarian approach actually confirms the inverse, a communitarian-cosmopolitan position. The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Timothy 5:8, “But if anyone does not make provision for his relations, and especially for the members of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever”.

¹¹ Barth’s theology is obviously more complicated than this. Gene Outka notes that Barth tried to maintain “the centrality of equal regard as the normative content of *agape*”, but also that he “correlates *agape* with faith ... occurring only to certain men. Sometimes he proceeds to say as well that the objects of *agape* are confined to co-believers (a move I [Outka] at least find to be confused)” (Outka 1977, p. 255).

This verse, it is argued, “in an unequivocal manner”, undermines the “equal pull”, cosmopolitan, image of the moral field in theories of Christian love (Post 1990, p. 102). But is this right? Is this the natural reading of this verse? More reflection reveals that Paul is actually saying that it is a characteristic feature of the “pagans/unbelievers” to *at least have the moral sense to care for their families and relations*, and if one does not *at least* do this, they are “worse than” an unbeliever. This clearly implies that the hallmark of Christians (and the very nature of the Gospel itself) is to do what the pagans do (care for their own), but do more than *that*, to care and make provision for more than merely their “familiar”.¹² That is the unequivocal meaning of this verse, and many others.¹³ Thus this communitarian reading is incorrect in asserting that Paul is not aiming for some type of “equal pull”; but it is correct in affirming the importance of concrete communities (and their constituting narratives or covenants) for the maintenance of this particular quality of love.¹⁴ Paul’s position can be stated as a communitarian cosmopolitan maxim: *it is the decisive mark of Christians to move beyond special relations but not in a way that neglects these special relations*.

This very logic appears when Staniloae quotes Maximus the Confessor:

¹² Furthermore, it was a definite feature of the pagan world to cultivate *political* solidarity. Both religious piety and all sorts of social experimentation aimed to bring about greater loyalty, almost never to humanity but to the *polis* for the Greeks and the Empire for the later Romans. Christianity, or the Gospel, is the extension of solidarity beyond the *polis* and *imperium* based on God’s universal love expressed both in creation and in Christ. This cosmopolitan feature as the very essence of the Christian Gospel is underappreciated.

¹³ The communitarian cosmopolitan formula “to one another and to all” is throughout the NT, including 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 5:15, Romans 12:14-21 (Horrell 2005, p. 262). Sometimes the relative emphasis is on the “*to all*”, sometimes on the ecclesial “*to one another*”, but there is almost always a cosmopolitan and not merely a political or ecclesial moral horizon in view. This is important because Horrell chooses the liberal-communitarian debate from *political* philosophy “in order to establish a contemporary context in which to read Paul’s ethics” (Horrell 2005, p. 47). However, Horrell’s “contemporary context” is too narrow either for Paul’s theology, or for the needs of the contemporary world, which is why (this thesis argues) the debates in human development are a more appropriate “contemporary context” for interpreting Biblical ethics.

¹⁴ Galatians 6:10 is worth quoting in full: “Therefore, as opportunity offers, let us work for the good of all, especially members of the household of faith”. This verse is given to “balance out” Paul’s communitarianism of 1 Timothy 5:8 (Post 1990, p. 102). But this verse is saying exactly the same but even more clearly—a communitarian cosmopolitanism.

God, by nature good and without passion, loves each person equally, as His creature, but glorifies the virtuous ... likewise, the ... positive man loves everybody the same, the virtuous for his nature and for his good will; and the evil one for his nature and out of sympathy (Staniloae 2003, p. 307).

This clearly implies an equality of love, based on a shared human nature. But notice that God loves each one equally, but “glorifies” the virtuous. “Glory” is a communal, a shared concept that arises out of concrete communities valorising certain types of actions and commitments.¹⁵ Earlier it was seen how the saints and martyrs illustrated a new understanding of glory in contradistinction to the martial glory of Greece and Rome. The “wreath of glory” is given, according to Maximus, to those who embody the virtues aspiring towards universal love.

Love is multidimensional—depending upon, but extending beyond, the sympathies within familiar bonds to a service beyond the familiar,¹⁶ all the while looking “upward” as it were, to a loving God, backward to the example of Christ in history, and forward to the coming Kingdom when “fullness of life” is achieved. Love as the summit of the virtues includes all the other virtues, all dimensions of existence, and seeks to include all others. Love is a dimension of life as a whole, permeating all other dimensions. Thunberg sums up Maximus’s vision of the multidimensionality of love superbly:

Charity secures not only a unified movement toward God as the true goal of man, but also the good use of man’s different natural faculties and a just relationship between all men who share the same nature (Thunberg 1985, p. 108).

This quotation captures the essence of an Orthodox theology of development. Charity, or love, is the supreme “factor of integration”. This is to say, the human’s *single* nature

¹⁵ These cosmopolitan virtues are “comprehensive goods” to use the earlier terminology. They are not liberally neutral between competing conceptions of the good. These carry in their train a whole series of positive obligations.

¹⁶ This need not be only the biological family. The monastery was conceived as a supreme location of virtues.

(*logos*) has *two* irreducible dimensions or functions for loving union: union with God and union with others (which correspond to the two Great Commandments). These dimensions are never entirely the same, nor are they ever entirely separate, and neither are they separate from the development of human powers or the “different natural faculties” and justice between persons. The understanding of charity outlined here is much more comprehensive than some in that while universal love is enjoined, its platform remains within the concrete community and it aims at “capability development” or the good use of all the natural faculties, and by all who share the same nature.

However, even if one is perfect in virtue, perfect in regards to placing persons over things, one still must face the question about priorities. Humans necessarily live with finite abilities to give and share. Two things are equally unhelpful and ultimately irresponsible. One is to say that love should have equal regard for all without *any* regard for distinctions and the other is to say that Christian love should focus *primarily* on those within. Better criteria are needed. *Some* priority indeed must be given for special relations and to fail to do so would eventuate in universal chaos. But persons are often unreflective and lazy in this and the conventional wisdom fails to capture the extent of responsibilities owed to the wider human community. Framed as loyalty to special relations, *or* loyalty to persons in general misses how extreme vulnerabilities can helpfully structure priorities. (This may appear obvious to common sense, but common sense is often terribly uncommon in the theoretical realm, both in theology and the social sciences.) Thus an even remotely adequate ethic of love should contain at least these three criteria. It: a) includes priorities for special relations, b) aspires toward equal concern, and c) discriminates within this equal concern through the additional criteria of addressing extreme vulnerabilities.

If this is granted, the issue then becomes critical reflection on what one’s special relations actually require for well-being in terms of *needs* versus *desires*. This becomes the

foundational issue because “it is within a person’s power to change his preferences, in a way that it is not within his power to change his needs” (Goodin 1985, p. 199). One can see where asceticism would play a necessary role in not being dominated by selfish preferences, and similarly the role of self-discipline in reasoning clearly, compassionately, and resolutely not only about one’s own situation, but others in their plight (e.g. actually *becoming* Smith or Sen’s ‘Impartial Spectator’). Wisdom or *phronesis* will of course be required and there are never easy answers. This judgement can receive guidance by an understanding of basic needs and dimensions of flourishing which is the analytic ambit of the social sciences.

But there is more; the trade-offs, or tensions, between meeting the needs of special relations and addressing the needs of the vulnerable *are* inflated. The social sciences have shown that humans do not need as much “stuff” to be happy as is often thought. Multiple studies have shown that while some economic development is important for well-being, it quickly becomes marginal, subject to diminishing and even negative returns past a certain modest, *low* middle class, per capita income (Gasper 2006). Studies also show that happiness is largely found in relationships, in self-giving and even character development, not in unlimited consumer acquisition (Myers 1992; Lane 1994; Layard 2005; Bok 2010; Proyer, Ruch et al. 2012). And there is emerging evidence that materialism breeds unhappiness and various forms of ill-being (Kasser 2003). There are thus *eudaimonistic* (happiness/well-being) aspects of the social sciences that confirm the Biblical axiom, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20). This is to say that it may not be as difficult as the conventional wisdom holds (with ever adequate support from the marketing industry) in preventing “laudable loyalties” (Goodin 1985, p. 23) from “running riot” over one’s general duties for protecting the vulnerable. This vulnerability approach accords

well with the moral intuitions of the Samaritan parable which informs not only Christians, but the secular world as well—and occasionally the latter more than the former.¹⁷

But even this clarification of principle, while helpful, will not by itself resolve many concrete ethical disputes in their myriad complexities. Staniloae would argue that acting on *agape* in a situation is not one that can easily be defined beforehand, and is best determined by the experienced person of wisdom, the *phronimos* (or saint) whose reason and disposition are trained through many years of experience. *Phronesis*, or expert judgement, is not merely acting on a set of general, even if correct basic principles. But *phronesis* will be all the more difficult if the basic underlying principles are defective.

Love is the highest virtue and the synthesis of all other virtues. In contrast to the Western intellectual tradition that posits “Cogito Ergo Sum”, Staniloae argues that Christianity’s starting point is “Amo Ergo Sum”, reason situated within an “Ontology of Love”. Staniloae does not reject the Cartesian approach, but places “it within the right metaphysical framework” (Rogobete 1997, p. 283), which is to say, the Trinity. However, in terms of understanding Orthodoxy’s structure or ontology of love and how this relates to human development, there is one more major doctrine to investigate, and that is synergy. This is vitally important because “synergy is the general formula for the working of God in the world” (Staniloae 2000, p. 60).

¹⁷ This is one sphere of Christian spirituality that has traction in “secular” development debates (Kleinig 1976; Mack 1980; McFarland 2001). Even Sen references this Samaritan ethic (Sen 2009). From an Orthodox perspective, the focus on Pauline ethics and not interpreting them in light of the Gospels and the teaching of Jesus is undoubtedly a result of those forces described earlier that separates grace from nature, social ethics from salvation, and faith from works.

9.3 Synergy: the general formula for the working of God in the world

Freedom's strong currency within the economy of Orthodoxy is especially evident in the doctrine of *synergy* or "action with". Staniloae quotes approvingly a famous passage by Vladimir Lossky: "God becomes powerless before human freedom; He cannot violate it since it flows from His own omnipotence". But the passage taken from Lossky goes on to say, "A single will for creation, but two for deification" (Staniloae 2000, p. 108). Deification is synergy and synergy is God's will *cooperating* with humanity's; humanity's with His. Synergy is a dogmatic technical expression for the *summum bonum* of EO and is that "communion in freedom is the source of good" (Staniloae 2000, p. 180). Synergy represents reciprocity, a unity that does not undermine but actually enhances and strengthens the particular identities and powers of each. Synergy is cooperation, which is to say it is "non-monoenergetic" (Thunberg 1985, p. 52)—more on this term below.

The Eastern dogma of synergy stands in conscious tension with a position associated with Augustine, and especially late in his career, that only one "energy" or action in the universe is effective for salvation, and that is God's. This position was formalized in the Canons of the Council of Orange in 529 that would be influential on the Reformed doctrine of total depravity. This was a position that is called, in its correct technical formulation, "monergism".¹⁸ However, there is a regulative principle within EO that emphasizes not "monergism", but "synergism", such that humans freely cooperate with Divine agency, and

¹⁸ Under St. Vincent of Lerins in the Orthodox calendar, it reads:

Without identifying by name Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Saint Vincent condemns his doctrine of Grace and predestination, calling it heresy to teach of 'a certain great and special and altogether personal grace of God [which is given] without any labour, without any effort, without any industry, even though they neither ask, nor seek, nor knock' (Monastary 2009).

not merely in a passive way, but exercising true agency, a source of real human (but God given) power and grace.¹⁹

9.3.1 Horizontal Synergy

Synergy, the “general formula for the working of God in the world” applies in many directions such as between God and humanity (“vertically”), but also between persons (“horizontally”). Staniloae notes that the Holy Spirit has a special role in synergy: “The Holy Spirit is what unites the Father and the Son, not as essence but precisely as Person, leaving Father and Son at the same time as free Persons. Hence the Spirit is also the one who unites men among themselves, but as a Person himself he leaves other persons free” (Staniloae 1980, p. 102). The Spirit is the power of communion both with God, and between humans. Yet it is more complicated still, for these two dimensions interact in important ways. This section will briefly analyze synergy on a horizontal, inter-human level, bringing out new dimensions, and the next will analyze synergy more directly between humans and God.

It has been sufficiently demonstrated already that inter-human sympathy is intrinsic to well-being, and salvation for Orthodoxy is about the activation of all dimensions, communion having an architectonic role. But beyond communion itself as a desirable dimension, Staniloae shows, as did Maximus above, that love unlocks human potentials

¹⁹ John Cassian (360-435) articulated “synergism” in conscious contrast to the Augustine influenced model of monergism. This synergistic model of divine-human interaction was later vindicated in the Eastern tradition by Maximus the Confessor on the basis of Chalcedonian Christology— “union without confusion”—a synergy of the *two* operative wills of Christ, human and divine. In the Church calendar, it is noted that John Cassian (350 – 433) fought equally against “Pelagianism”, and Augustinianism:

Pelagianism, which taught that Christ was a mere man who without the help of God had avoided sin, and that it was possible for man to overcome sin by his own efforts ... The error opposed to Pelagianism but equally ruinous was Augustine's teaching that after the fall, man was so corrupt that he could do nothing for his own salvation, and that God simply predestined some men to salvation and others to damnation. Saint John Cassian refuted this blasphemy ... at length and with many citations from the Holy Scriptures, [showing] the Orthodox teaching of the balance between the grace of God on one hand, and man's efforts on the other, necessary for our salvation (Monastary 2009).

(*logoi*), revealing the “synergy” between interpersonal communion and intrapersonal “capability” development: “Everyone’s subject hides indefinite potentials, which can be turned to good account by love” (Staniloae 2003, p. 316).²⁰ The empirical verification of this was seen in the requirements of parental affection for the proper development of infant’s neurological systems.

Solidarity is thus not created by humans, but is built into the very structure of existence, but *humans contribute significantly to it*. Nature finds its fulfilment in the human person, who brings about and enhances nature’s own potentialities for solidarity. When nature is used “in conformity with itself”, it is in turn the medium through which one “brings his good intentions” to others in the form of the gifts of nature. But this respect for nature does not mean nature is not to be transformed through work. Nature is a malleable, contingent rationality and is openly structured for the interventions of the creative human imagination. Thus “humans must work and think in solidarity with regard to the transformation of the gifts of nature” (Staniloae 2000, p. 4). And “even with its limited effects, the work man performs on nature in order to make of it in his turn a gift to others recalls the creative act of God whose complete gift is nature” (Staniloae 2000, p. 5). Solidarity with nature has as its *telos* solidarity among humans.²¹

Inter-human synergy concerns primarily the second Great commandment, but focusing exclusively on this can distort a proper understanding of the human condition. Rather, the function of the *two* commandments in Orthodoxy corresponds to the right operation of the *two* fundamental relational functions of the *single* human *logos*, and that is the God

²⁰ One implication of the doctrine of synergy should perhaps be made clear: synergy dissolves the “win-lose” relationship between God’s powers, and humans that monergism structures. This has been a fundamental problem in Western Christianity in relating faith and development. Feuerbach’s: “To enrich God, man must become poor; that God may be all, man must be nothing” (in Casanova 1994, p. 34) makes no sense within Eastern Orthodoxy.

²¹ This does not mean that there is no intrinsic value in non-human nature, just that human nature stands at a higher plane.

orientation, and the human orientation. To isolate either of them or to try and reduce one to the other is to warp and disfigure the human condition. In light of this it would make sense that if one dimension is defective or suffering, it would affect other dimensions in a similar fashion as when one is malnourished one cannot think well. But the inverse is true as well, that the well functioning of one dimension enhances the other.²² For Staniloae, one cannot have a relationship with God without being in good relation with neighbours, so much so that “we experience or test our love for God by human love” (Staniloae 2000, p. 199). Staniloae writes: “Love for God, or more strictly, thought taken for God, represents a continuous contribution toward keeping the world in movement towards more and more authentically human relations among humans” (Staniloae 2000, p. 196).

For Staniloae, *the way to God lies through one's neighbour*. The deprioritization of the neighbour relation in favour of the God relation, that is, reducing the plural goods of the two Great commands to one, has resulted in the downgrading of *praxis* and viewing it as inferior to theology proper. This has meant, ironically, the marginalizing of theology itself. This disfigurement of the richness of the human condition, captured by the irreducible importance and interpenetration of both commandments, has created revulsion to Christianity and is also why Christianity and human development have often seemed irrelevant one to the other. If one reads the actual writings of Enlightenment figures and not interpretations of them (e.g. (Gay 1966)) one gathers the sensation that many of these thinkers were not so much anti-religious, but wanted Christianity to live up to the Christian humanism embedded in Christ's teaching. A leading Enlightenment historian, J.B. Schneewind writes:

²² The notion that there is a synergy between the two Great commandments in that each enhances the other, receives social science confirmation, even if in a rudimentary stage. Recall that in the Positive Psychology virtue list of Seligman, the virtue of Transcendence was not just a virtue or dimension alongside the others. It indeed was a distinct virtue, or its own dimension, but it was found to give strength and enhance the other virtues such as humanity, justice, temperance, wisdom and knowledge.

[T]he inherited conceptions of morality [from European Christianity] did not allow for a proper appreciation of human dignity, and therefore did not properly even allow even for the moral teachings of the Christianity that many of them still accepted (Schneewind 1998, p. 5).²³

But the inverse is true as well; not only does the way to God lie through one's neighbour, but the way to one's neighbour lies through God. When the multi-dimensionality of Christianity is reduced either to a) one's relationship with God, or b) the neighbour relation alone having absolute priority, both of these create deformities in the human condition. This is to say prayer and asceticism and a relationship with the Divine is a dimension of well-being in its own right, but it also contributes to health and human relations (Johnstone, Yoon et al. 2012). Even if one does not accept the thesis of original depravity, nonetheless, "no human being can overcome the tendency to reuse the other, after the warmth of their first encounter has cooled" (Staniloae 2000, p. 198). Others are instrumentalized, objectified. God as supreme Subject "deepens in our eyes the value and mystery of the other person and thereby strengthens our own love for that person and vice versa" (Staniloae 2000, p. 198).

The interaction between the vertical and the horizontal, or to say the synergy between the two great commandments, can be clarified by reverting again to Orthodoxy's theological anthropology that is both Christological and Trinitarian, and briefly showing how these two dogmas relate. Staniloae writes:

The Holy Trinity determined upon the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension as man of one of the persons of the Trinity so that this person might recapitulate all men in himself and thus bring all into eternal communion with God in Trinity. We have to do here with a circular movement that sets out from the Trinity towards men in order to lead them into the Trinity (Staniloae 1994, p. 76).

²³ One author notes, speaking in a Western theological context: "It is true that few people until relatively recent times thought the Sermon on the Mount as the essence of Christian teaching" (Bowman 2006, p. 48); the same largely holds true for the Great Commandments.

This “circular movement” (the *exitus-reditus*/exit-return model transformed from neo-Platonism) is the overall structure of Orthodox theology and how the Trinity and Incarnation relate. Christ is sent (and sends himself) in mission and by uniting humans with himself, elevates and incorporates persons into the communion of the Trinity.

But this passage could imply a passive relationship of humanity *vis-à-vis* God’s activity *ad extra* in the economy of salvation and would thus be inconsistent with the regulative principle of synergy. In this longer and quite remarkable quote, Staniloae shows this same structure, but in a very precise way illustrating the cooperative notion of synergy:

By deciding, therefore, to act outside himself in conformity with his being, which is to say, as the good that is eternal interpersonal communion, God makes use of his power to create persons who are to move towards the perfection of communion with him and among themselves [the two dimensions of the Great commands]. This movement is to come from themselves on the one hand, while on the other hand created persons are to be placed within this movement by God himself through his coming to meet them. For this purpose he both implants in them a natural power of movement towards himself and also strengthens this natural created power of theirs with the uncreated power of his benevolence which comes to meet them (Staniloae 1994, p. 187).

Persons are created for communion with God and among themselves, and contribute by their God-given powers to this, that are simultaneously met by God’s powers. Humans in a sense are all “brothers” or family in the image of the Trinity, but this has been ruptured through sin. By uniting with Christ, by adopting the virtues of Christ, humans become brothers with the eternal Son of God. In becoming brother with the eternal son of God, the God-man, in this quality begins a process of maturation *between* humans “to reflect the relationship between the Son and the Father and the Holy-Spirit” (Rogobete 1997, p. 284).²⁴

²⁴ Staniloae writes in this regard:

As a work of raising up believers to intimate communion with God, salvation and deification are nothing other than the extension to conscious creatures of the relations that obtain between the divine persons.

The account must now turn directly to the Divine-human relation or synergy. Mentioned again is the earlier principle that charity is intended to work in an integrated fashion on three dimensions: a) securing a unified movement towards God, b) the good use of the persons' different faculties or powers c) and a just relationship with all who share the same nature. Each of these dimensions enhances the other, and are in turn enhanced by God's active power *pro nobis*.

9.3.2 Vertical Synergy

Up until now the role of human agency and interpersonal communion in *theosis* has been emphasized in order to trigger dialogue with the social sciences. There has also been attention given to the various "ontological" structures within which human agency operates as well as voluntary communion as the highest expression of the human good. However, a more complete picture of *theosis* must be given which emphasizes God's initiative. Orthodoxy is no Promethean ethical humanism where humans have to rely only on their own resources; "A purely human training to awaken some unknown 'sleeping power' isn't enough" (Staniloae 2003, p. 28).

The nature of the relation between God and humans is, arguably, a major difference in Eastern theology vis-à-vis the West:

If one were to summarize the differences between the eastern and western traditions in a single word, that word would be 'synergy'. For the East the highest form of communion with the divine is not primarily an intellectual act, but a sharing of life and activity (Bradshaw 2004, p. 264-5).

That is why the Trinity reveals itself essentially in the work of salvation and that is why the Trinity is the basis on which salvation stands (Staniloae 1994, p. 248).

The assertion that western traditions uniformly understand communion with God as an intellectual act is an overstatement, especially in light of the changes since Vatican II in Catholic theology. However, the assertion that salvation involves for EO “sharing of life and activity” with God is correct. The aim of this last section is to show how this “sharing of life and activity”, or synergy, contributes to a theology of human development.

To begin, it is important to recall that for Orthodoxy one cannot “access” or participate in the *essence* (or *ousia*) of God through the human intellect, or in any way. However, while God’s “essence” is completely beyond knowing or participation, his activities (*energeia*), are not. This essence-energies distinction is a corollary to the doctrine of synergy and one cannot be understood without the other. This essence-energies distinction was definitively formulated by Gregory Palamas (1296–1359) in the context of the “Hesychastic” monastic controversy, however, this dogma was anticipated earlier by Maximus and the Church Fathers. St. Basil for example affirms that “We know the essence through the energy” (Ware 1998, p. 22). Staniloae, according to Kallistos Ware, was a “decisive pioneer” in the revival of this Palamistic doctrine (Staniloae 1994, p. xii). In its simplicity, it asserts simultaneously two paradoxical facts: the complete otherness/Transcendence of God (as Essence) and the complete nearness/Immanence of God (as Energies).²⁵ Though paradoxical, these energies in some way express the very essence of God. This distinction, furthermore, is behind the priority of practical reason to theoretical that has been developed in this study.

²⁵ Considerable debate surrounds the nature of this distinction that can become extremely technical and need not be detailed. For an entry into the debate by a Catholic Trinitarian theologian critical of this distinction, but who is otherwise sympathetic to Eastern Orthodoxy, see (LaCugna 1991). For a comprehensive overview from a sympathetic Protestant perspective, see (Bartos 1999, pp. 57-79). See (Williams 1977) for a biting accusation of Palamism as Neoplatonic pantheism and (Bradshaw 2004, p. 270-3) for a rebuttal.

Previously the terminology has been largely in reference to *logoi*, and now the vocabulary is shifting to that of “energies”. These terms are not consistently employed.²⁶ However, a brief *interpretation* of their differences will be offered here for it can help further explain the relevance of synergy for human development. The *logoi*, as explained before are the laws, principles, tendencies, dimensions and virtues of this natural life. They have their absolute foundation in the one Logos, Christ. But the one Logos is not isolated but is in relation with the Father and the Spirit. The *logoi* thus partake of a tendency for both unity and diversity, and can be thought of as the principles of this existence that give it both stability and vitality or dynamism. The *logoi* are grace, aspects of grace, but they are dimensions of this natural life. These *logoi* are *internal* to this life and include freedom, as well as structures, natural and moral laws, potentials, and human sympathies (*eros*)—among other aspects. Staniloae writes that the *logoi* are God’s ideas (Staniloae 2003, p. 221), but one should not gather from this that the *logoi* correspond primarily to intellectual ideas and not to the biological or social realm. They are *created* gifts and they are not directly God’s actions *per se* in the sense that humans exercise real freedom.

The Divine energies on the other hand are described as *uncreated*. They are God’s Personal presence as Tri-Unity to the creature. These energies, “paralleling” the *logoi*, are also a Unity in Diversity; one in will or purpose (love), but different in actions and manifestations. They are God’s agency or activity *ad extra* and they constitute a desire for communion with, and the well-being of, the creature. These energies “lead” the creature towards human development, which is to say communion with others, God, and the fulfilment of all dimensions of existence. The energies of God are always “one step

²⁶ Staniloae writes, using the terms synonymously “...putting into concepts some of the *logoi* or energies of His” (Staniloae 2003, p. 220). Bradshaw notes that Palamas does on one occasion identify the divine *logoi* with God’s creative *energeia*, “but this is an exceptional instance” (Bradshaw 2004, p. 271). Again, the terminology is not consistent.

ahead”²⁷ of where persons are presently at in terms of human development. The energies lead (by the Holy Spirit) humanity and creation forward on the never-ending journey of *epektasis*, or continual growth. These energies are not, however, impersonal, but are God’s personal engagement with the world. “The East has no concept of God. It views God not as an essence to be grasped intellectually, but as a personal reality known through His acts” (Bradshaw 2004). These energies sustain the world in Being, guiding it towards Well-being and Eternal being. One author, writing about God’s *eros* for the world, but also *eros* from within the world as creational gift, captures the essence of synergy remarkably well:

Thus “eros” has a dual connotation: on the one hand, an uncreated Energy of God Himself, and on the other, a created energy [or *logoi*] made in the image of the uncreated Energy that exists at every level of creation. It is a kind of universal life-force which is communicated to different creatures on different levels in different ways depending on the degree they can participate in it by nature. At each level above the animal it may be rightly directed or wrongly directed; but it remains in essence good (Moss 2010, p. 241).

The use here of “created energy” instead of *logoi*, while not according to the conventional terminology, has merits due to the connotation of dynamism.²⁸ But whether they are called *logoi* or *created* energies, these parallel the *uncreated* energies of God which is why grace and nature stand in such close relation. The essence of synergy is the cooperation or mutual enrichment of God’s activity or energies with natural, created, processes, including human freedom. Even prior to the Incarnation, God’s energies encouraged the right use of human agency “at each level above”. Staniloae talks about Providence’s role:

²⁷ This expression, “one step ahead”, recalls Alfred North Whitehead’s “Process Theology”. And indeed there are fruitful connections. It is beyond the scope of this research, but that both Orthodoxy and Process Theology are called “panentheism” signals similarities; but differences remain. Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko has engaged in the most serious research on this connection (Hopko 1986).

²⁸ The terminology “created energies” brings out a needed angle that the term *logoi* can miss. *Logoi* leads one to think of structures, patterns, tendencies and laws; *created* “energy” makes one think of the gift of free agency, creativity, and dynamism from within creation. Both of these, the structural aspect and the creative agency aspect, characterize the human condition and are created energies, or *logoi*. These terms complement each other.

At times, the working of God strengthens our own work and crowns it with success; at other times it blocks our path or brings failures and sufferings in its wake, inasmuch as what we have done does not correspond to the direction of our genuine development ... for no contradiction exists between created nature and the powers of God [energies] who is perfecting his creation (Staniloae 2000, p. 60-1).

Synergy thus has to do with God guiding humanity and nature towards its genuine development. God's energies, or activities, involve a "personal" revelation in creation and thus Staniloae writes that "nature can be the medium through which the believer receives divine grace or the beneficent uncreated energies" (Staniloae 2000, p. 3).²⁹ These divine operations sustain and guide the creation which was made in the image of God's Trinitarian nature, the supreme structure of love. This entails a "wisdom [which] can have no other bases than the perfection of the Trinitarian communion" (Staniloae 1994, p. 214).³⁰ All of reality participates in a longing or yearning for Trinitarian wholeness, one dimension of which is the energy of justice. Staniloae writes:

Those who participate in the energies of God (among which is numbered the energy of justice) first through their being and then through grace—by which their being is re-established and strengthened—are themselves also animated by the impulse to bring about justice. And they also urge others to do justice (Staniloae 1994, p. 220).

Staniloae then notes that justice must be internal (in a person's heart) and external (social structures) and that God's justice will fill the earth precisely because it will be "shown from the side of God and from our side" (Staniloae 1994, p. 220ff). This "from both sides" is the essence of synergy.

²⁹ Thus it is *not* correct to think that *logoi* = nature, and energies = grace because grace is also within creation. But this grace in creation is "met" and supported by the Divine Energies that are always leading nature to its proper destination.

³⁰ And here, Staniloae complements the communitarian point with the cosmopolitan:

Interpersonal communion is an image of the Trinitarian communion and a participation in it. Hence, the divine image in the human person is an image of the Trinity and reveals itself in human communion. St. Gregory of Nyssa observed that "the image is not in a part of our nature, nor is the grace in any one of the things found in nature, but this power extends equally to all the race" (Staniloae 2000, p. 94).

This is also why one can see and experience God in creation (natural theology) and in scientific discovery,³¹ as well as the unity and diversity within the human species and the *eros* for greater communion and justice—human development. But, and this is critical, this ability to perceive God and his intentions in creation has been damaged. Understanding God’s purposes as *loving-kindness to all* has become difficult to discern with any certainty for humanity on their own.

9.3.3 Salvation History and Human Development

This is where “salvation history” becomes decisive. God, in order to reveal himself as loving-kindness to all, and unequivocally beyond the energies in creation and providence, inaugurated a surer plan. This of course is the Incarnation: the humble birth in a stable, the temptation in the wilderness, the sermon on the mountain, the transfiguration, the entire life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Through this, God’s loving purposes for humanity cease to be dim but become radiant; revelation is no longer just generally perceived in nature. In the *theanthropos* (God-man) “God has truly come to men in the closest intimacy and dialogue” (Staniloae 1980, p. 168). Here Protestants strongly agree and the decisive role of salvation history—the “Great acts of God” are affirmed.

But how salvation history is interpreted beyond this basic similarity reveals a very large divergence and one vitally important for a theology of development. Two questions must be answered here. First, how does one participate in or appropriate these past historical actions that all recognize are somehow central for salvation; and second, what is the

³¹ That is, one can perceive the energies, the presence of God, by contemplating the *logoi* of creation (Bradshaw 2004, p. 206).

relationship of these special acts of God in ancient history to present day human development?

For Orthodoxy, the answer to the first question of how one participates in, or has “faith in” salvation history is: “not simply through belief”. Rather it is through *mimetic* action, through the imitation of Christ, or participation in Christ’s virtues, or what Staniloae calls “following his example” (Staniloae 1980, p. 169). Enough has been said about the fact of the virtues in Orthodoxy and their relation to *theosis*; what needs more clarification is how the virtues allow Orthodoxy to affirm the equipriority of salvation history and human development as if they are two sides to the same coin.

Synergy is based on a reciprocal exchange of qualities between God and man. Staniloae, as was seen, did not frequently employ the term *imitation* of Christ.³² The term however, if qualified, is helpful and since Maximus and others employed it—will be used here.³³ For Maximus, this reciprocal exchange or union with Christ is “brought about by divine love for man and the human charity that imitates it. To participate in the divine *energeia* is here straightforwardly a matter of doing as God does” (in Bradshaw 2004, p. 199).³⁴ With this “doing as God does” as a foundation of *theosis*, and thus participating in the divine energies/actions, one can further see the theological rationale for placing *praxis* before *theoria*, *phronesis* prior to *episteme*, love prior to theological contemplation. The priority of *praxis* to *theoria* is related to the question of how loving actions are participation in the

³² He does use the expression “imitation of Christ” occasionally (Staniloae 2012, p. 100).

³³ Even though Staniloae largely avoided imitation, it is used however by many Orthodox authors, including Nicholas Cabasilas, John Climacus (Spidlik 1986, p. 40) and as seen here, Maximus the Confessor. Staniloae emphasized that Christ “exists as a model connected ontologically with every man and exercising real power over all men” (Staniloae 1980), but also that humans participate in Christ by the virtues—and the virtues require action. The point here is that any notion of imitation (and human ethical effort, however it is described) must be situated in this larger ontological and mystical context, and an awareness of the Divine Energies that aid humans, as well as the ecclesial and liturgical context that nourish these.

³⁴ Bradshaw points out that “Truth” in scripture is understood often as activities to be performed, John 3:21, 1 John 1:6, Isaiah 64:5, Jeremiah 9:24, Psalm 103:6, Acts 10:35, James 1:20, I John 2:29, 3:7, 10 (Bradshaw 2004, p. 274).

divine energies and thus both revealing and developing the objective “norms of existence”—the *logoi* of human development. Imitating the *Logos* reveals and unlocks the *logoi*, God’s intentions for human flourishing. These are the principles of Being and Well-being and on to Eternal-being. *Phronesis*, or wisdom, theology itself is a life of rational reflection, following the example of Christ, the *Phronimos*.

Persons are thus “saved” not through mere belief, nor a one-sided extrinsic action of God, but through *mimesis*,³⁵ which is imitating or re-incarnating Christ’s love for humanity and especially the vulnerable. For the Cappadocians as well as Maximus, Christianity was “essentially the imitation of the incarnate life of Christ” (Russell 2004, p. 13). Hippolytus put it most succinctly: by obeying Christ’s precepts, one “become[s] a good imitator of him who is good” (Russell 2004, p. 111).³⁶ Maximus writes, reflecting directly the energies language:

Nothing is so conducive for justification or so fitted for divinization ... and nearness to God as mercy offered with pleasure and joy to those who stand in need. For if the Word has shown that the one who is in need of having good done to him is God—“inasmuch as ye have done it,” he says “unto one of the least of these, ye have done it to me” [Matt. 25:40], and He who speaks is God—then He will much more show that the one who can do good and does it is truly God by grace and participation, because he has taken on in proper imitation the activity (energeian) and characteristic of His own beneficence (Maximus Confessor 1985, p. 211-12).³⁷

One becomes “near to God” thus by re-enacting, re-incarnating Christ’s beneficence for those who stand in need.³⁸ On this understanding, the role of salvation history was to reveal God’s loving concern for all of humanity, that all participate equally in the *Logos*

³⁵ Better put from Staniloae’s perspective, instead of imitating could be “participating in Christ” a principle aspect of which is winning the virtues of Christ, which is a “love for all” (Staniloae 2012, p. 72).

³⁶ Clement of Alexandria, in a work entitled “The Word our Paedagogus”, describes “being assimilated to God by a participation in virtue” and the “moral loveliness” that comes from “the training of Christ” has as its primary fruit the development of a “generous disposition” (Stevenson 1987, p. 182).

³⁷ This translation has also followed that of (Bradshaw 2004, p. 199).

³⁸ Beneficence is doing active kindness by removing a harm or improving a situation. It is to be distinguished strongly from nonmaleficence, or simply “not doing harm”.

(the *imago dei*: John 1:9; James 3:9), and special concern is to be shown for the poor and vulnerable. Maximus writes:

And if the poor man is God, it is because of God's condescension in becoming poor for us and in taking upon Himself by his own sufferings of each one ... All the more reason then, will one be God who by loving men in imitation of God heals by himself in divine fashion the hurts of those who suffer (Maximus Confessor 1985, p. 212).

Maximus's logic is clear: the poor man is "God" because of God's identification with him as a sort of "patient" apart from the exercise of his own agency. If this is the case, *a fortiori* will one be like (or participate in) God if one exercises one's agency in imitation of the Divine agency, by healing the hurts of those who suffer. And far from being merely a spiritualist enterprise, this imitative action is understood precisely as an unleashing of the universal potentials (*logoi*) of human development, or undoing the "shredding of human nature". Lars Thunberg writes that "the condescending philanthropy invites man to the very end to an imitation that liberates him from his anti-human egoism" and that this theme is what Maximus prefers to underline (Thunberg 1985, p. 67).

Orthodoxy insists that God took the initiative in salvation: God's "energy" in the Incarnation wakes up humanities—but it is human love, or *eros* that voluntarily participates and is won over, and it is human action that is synergized, empowered by God.

Human agency remains engaged; humans are not puppets:

As inexhaustible source of energy, God shares his energy with the world and with man without upsetting the orderly rule of the world or reducing man's freedom or depriving the world of its own causality. Analogously, as humans energize one another, the same is true with God but to a greater degree ... human energy takes its beginning and has its growth from the divine energy (Staniloae 1980, 113-4).

Aristotle apparently invented the word "energy" and it is derived from "*ergon*" meaning "deed", or "thing done" (Bradshaw 2004, p. 1). Synergy, or deed done together, is the reproducing of the divine *philanthropia*. The Transcendent God, beyond form or shape,

takes form and shape in humanity through the virtues. One more remarkable passage of Maximus illustrates this:

God is thus manifest in those who possess [this grace], taking shape [morphoumenous] through love for mankind according to the specific character of the virtue of each, and condescending to be named accordingly. For it is the most perfect work of love, and the goal of its activity, to contrive through the mutual exchange of what is related that the names and properties of those who have been united through love should be fitting to one another. So the human being is made God, and God is called and appears as human, because of the single undeviating wish (in accordance with the will) and movement of both (Louth 1996, p. 86).

Synergy thus involves the “wishes” of both God and man. God, who is without form, takes form in the world through those who, by actions, share in His love for humankind, a love that was revealed in its full radiance in Christ.

So if the first question was: “How can one be ‘saved’”, then the answer is: not by mere belief but by participating in and reproducing “God’s universal love for humanity but especially the poor”. This is clear and ancient in Orthodoxy. Now the second question needs to be addressed and is linked to the first: “Can a rational, compelling relationship be forged between salvation history and human development?” The answer, and developed through the entirety of this study, is a thoroughgoing “Yes”! But before investigating this further, the implications for consigning salvation to the past must be examined.

If redemption was already completely accomplished in salvation history, and is appropriated through belief, this leaves Christianity vulnerable to criticism. One Jewish commentator, Gershom Sholem, has this to say about the moral relevance of what he called the Christian view of redemption:

In all its forms and manifestations, Judaism has always held firmly to a concept of redemption which understood it as a process which takes place under the public gaze, on the stage of history and in the medium of society, that is, which definitely takes place in the visible world ... By contrast, the view of Christianity is one in which redemption is a process in the intellectual sphere and in the invisible, which takes place in the world of

every individual, and brings about a hidden transformation, to which nothing external in the world need correspond (in Moltmann 1974 , p. 100).

Sholem does not have it quite right, for scholars address this by arguing that it is precisely the *historical* nature of the divine acts of salvation that preserves the public nature of the Gospel (Lee 1987). But the spirit of his criticism is correct if redemption is something God exclusively does on behalf of humans, and all the more so if it was only revealed in a few key actions within history. This swings the pendulum back and raises the Jewish question to Christianity in a new way: can the historical actions of God (that all Christians that are “orthodox” accept) be connected to a transformation that is effected on a public stage?³⁹ In other words, can theology that believes in the primacy of salvation history be *really* integrated with human development?

The contention here is that the virtue approach of Maximus, Staniloae, and the entire Orthodox tradition, culminating in the doctrine of synergy as imitation of the Divine *philanthropia*, meets this challenge and in a way that demonstrates that human development concerns have long been at the very heart of theology. Staniloae understands the real issues related to the Jewish criticism about Christian truth not being public:

Obviously we do not approach this new thing [the basis for Christianity] through miraculous acts produced by God either in nature or in history, but by an upward growth in spiritualization which is most certainly visible in an exterior way in the perfection of social relations and the mastery of nature by the spirit of an evolved mankind (Staniloae 1980, p. 128).

Staniloae completely rejects adapting Christianity to the modern world in a way that denies both the priority and reality of these redemptive historical actions. But on the other hand Staniloae shows that the very purpose of these actions is for human development, that is,

³⁹ This question of the relation of “God’s righteousness” or redemption vis-à-vis social transformation is, fortunately, contested in evangelicalism. Ron Sider is a prominent evangelical advocate for justice concerns. Yet he separates God’s redemption proper from justice concerns (Sider 1993). For an evangelical critique of this position, see (Samuel and Sugden 1999).

for enhancing the general experience of humankind, for “capability development”.⁴⁰ And a theme that Staniloae emphasizes is that Orthodox spirituality is inconceivable without the perfection or improvement of social relations.

This view of salvation clearly overlaps with Sen’s capability approach, while there are some departures. Even though elements of Sen’s approach are distorted by Western individualism, his approach nonetheless addresses in analytically astute ways the problems facing especially the most vulnerable. His concern, as was seen, is to conceptualize freedom and reason so they “can relate more generally to the miseries that lie within our power to help remedy” (Sen 1999, p. 283). Sen goes on to note that “that responsibility is not, of course, the only consideration that can claim our attention...” However, this “of course” is the crux of the issue: how indeed can “that responsibility” that Sen has laboured to bring to humanity’s attention, actually claim *sufficient* attention to “keep us awake at night” (Sen 2009, p. xii) and change people’s behaviour? Under what circumstances will the “relevance of our shared humanity” (Sen’s phrase) begin to make a difference in the actual *pattern* of choices made?

One suggestion, anticipated in chapter seven but demanding further explication here, involves the role of narrative. If development implies the exercise of practical reason through time, this is most appropriately grasped through a narrative structure. Narratives not only comprehend what is the case in terms of a series of actions and interrelated consequences, but it also has the power to fire the imagination and generate powerful emotions. Narratives allow persons to envision alternative storylines for their lives, or find new meaning for old ones. Paul Ricoeur’s analysis in the previous chapter argued that theological narratives provide not necessarily new experiences, but the *intensification*

⁴⁰ Staniloae occasionally uses the capability language: “We purchase the Kingdom of heaven from our fellow men ... and also with the capabilities which our faith in Christ has conferred upon us” (Staniloae 1980, p. 207).

of aspects of experience that might have been underperceived or connections unnoticed. Narratives do this in large part by constituting a community whose very identity is one of telling and retelling the story through actions as much as words (Ricoeur 1995, p. 241).

It has already been argued that while shared human nature can be a powerful basis of ethical concern, it does not do so automatically and requires a narrative or interpretive framework for this “shared fact” to gain necessary salience. A key dimension to the Christian story for Orthodoxy (and perhaps other traditions) is that humans share a nature that morally unites them. But shared nature only “plays this role” within a certain kind of interpretive framework. Both Sen and Nussbaum’s theories lack this feature, and because of their insistence on the individual person as the single moral principle, they cannot consistently develop this as a point of human solidarity.

Christianity however, is not only about shared nature, nor is it about persons, nor communion—nor even the combination of these three. Christianity is not just a Trinitarian model, but is the demonstration in history of a complete life, given as a pattern for humanity, entirely to “development action” (Tsetsis 1983, p. 95) and within a challenged context. This of course is the Incarnation and this means *sacrifice*. This is a missing ingredient in many discussions about human development and is a central node in the Christian narrative. An examination of the role of sacrifice in general, and the cross in particular, can forge this final connection between salvation history and human development, and with this, this study will come to a close.

In Orthodoxy, the cross is not the singular point of the story of salvation,⁴¹ but is central to that overall pattern that is revealed as *kenosis* in creation but pre-eminently in the

⁴¹ This is important because if the cross itself is the singular point of redemption, and not the overall self-giving *pattern* of Christ, this is a problem as “the words for ‘cross’ and ‘crucify’... are absent from Romans,

Incarnation (Philippians 2:7).⁴² This *kenosis* or “emptying” is the overall pattern of sacrificial giving on behalf of all.⁴³ As mentioned, this love is already present in creation, in God’s ongoing providence, but was decisively revealed in the Incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Christ.

For Orthodoxy there is a cross-shaped pattern inscribed on all of existence since Christ is the *Logos* and all things were made through him (Colossians 1: 15ff). The cross is what each person must bear, the cross of asceticism and self-restraint. The “flesh” must be crucified and this is the precondition for personal and social liberation. “Flesh” of course is not corporeal nature but is greed, envy, strife, hypocrisy, malice, selfish ambition, lust for pleasure and the like. These are the primary causes of misery, fights, quarrels, and wars (James 3). Staniloae has a section called “The Cross on the Gift of the World” (Staniloae 2000, pp. 21-27). For those who want to “profit selfishly” from the gifts of God in creation, and do not mortify selfishness, a cross of suffering will be imposed upon them against their will. But those who reject this cross often impose crosses of suffering and injustice on others. Paul Ricoeur points out how “narrative joins together agents and patients in the entangling of multiple life histories” (Ricoeur 1992, p. 320), and the “glory” of one person’s action can mean deep suffering for others.

Some narratives are shaped by historical conflict, span many generations, and include, but transcend, individual actors. Wounds are remembered and nursed from generation to

1 and 2 Thessalonians, the Pastoral Epistles, Petrine Epistles, and Johannine Epistles” (Horrell 2005, p. 37). Staniloae is very insistent that only when the cross is interpreted in the larger light of the Incarnation and Trinity can its true significance be revealed (Staniloae 1980, p. 126-127).

⁴² Western scholars have recently engaged the doctrine of *kenosis* and God’s self-limitation in creation as an act of love (Polkinghorne and Welker 2001). Staniloae writes: “The plan of God regarding the world itself represents a *kenosis* for him. It is a descent of God to the dimensions, possibilities, and necessities of this world” (Staniloae 1994, p. 212).

⁴³ This point of ethical universalism should not be taken for granted. The statement, “The universal character of God’s redemption corresponds to the universality of Christian ethical and social responsibility” (Betz 1979, p. 311) needs emphasizing precisely because it is *not* universally accepted among Biblical scholars.

generation. This negative cycle can sometimes only be broken through forgiveness, and this is a central point of the Christian narrative. Christ did not merely offer a teaching, he embodied the most radical forgiveness imaginable. The just “Lord”, through whom all was made, forgave the greatest injustice imaginable.⁴⁴ In this he did not merely teach forgiveness, but *inspired* in his followers the practice. Forgiveness of this sort is a distinctively Christian virtue, but one that can be cultivated in both interpersonal and international relations (Bole, Christiansen-SJ et al. 2004).⁴⁵ It is the concrete example provided *as* revelation that reveals new dimensions for moral thought and experience available for everyone.

Beyond forgiveness, the cross provides at least two additional dimensions relevant for human development. The first is the power to act in the midst of suffering and poverty, and the second is the ability to suffer and experience poverty on behalf of others. In terms of the first, Christ’s *kenosis* was a complete identification not just with humanity, but especially with the poor. One Orthodox statement on development notes: “The awareness that they [the poor] possess the dignity of the children of God should become for them a source of inspiration in creativity for their own development” (Tsetsis 1983, p. 91). By Christ identifying with the poor,⁴⁶ there is an elevating aspect for those on the underside of history.

But the cross also serves as a source of solidarity on behalf of the poor. Apart from being merely a piece of good advice for the poor to “keep their chin up”, this solidarity was

⁴⁴ It is often forgotten that it was not the “cross” *per se* that is the ground of forgiveness, but that Christ himself in a free choice, in the midst of horrific pain and dishonour, made this prayer: “Father forgive them...”

⁴⁵ Here is a clear example of where revelation provides a new basis for natural law; forgiveness as a virtue can demonstrate this relationship with clarity. Recall that Hannah Arendt wisely observed that it was Jesus that introduced the role of forgiveness in human affairs (Arendt 1998).

⁴⁶ Paul also identified with the poor, by taking on and insisting on the importance of manual labour in his tent-making. This enactment of the *kenosis* (self-lowering) was an essential part of his proclamation of the Gospel (Horrell 2005, p. 220).

institutionalized, even if imperfectly, as the Church. There can be little doubt that the triumph of Christianity was due largely to this factor, to the development of the institutional and liturgical context for the continuity of support and celebration of the virtues of a Christ-shaped love, which aspires to include all and inspired all sorts of social innovations and heroic acts to this end (Harakas 1989; Stark 1997). This, as has been seen, was a fact recognized even by the pagans, who sought to emulate it such as Julian the Apostate.

Christ-shaped love is active “renunciation of privileges for the sake of others”. In current Biblical studies, this is argued to be the “metanorm” that trumps all other laws (Horrell 2005, p. 222). The radical “other-regard” expressed in the engaged humility of Christ is a *pattern* that is highly relevant to human development.⁴⁷ It can engender forgiveness among antagonists, it can empower the poor in their own agency, but it can also build bridges of solidarity on behalf of the needy. Every person is to “be an imitator of Christ, who came to serve and not to be served” (Tsetsis 1983, p. 93). Staniloae writes: “if we act in the likeness of the God who is loving towards all, we act like men come to the highest point of their own realization, for our hearts are full of the most fervent love of all, God’s love” (Staniloae 1994, p. 227).

There is thus a healing structure or pattern, relevant for all of humanity, revealed in salvation history. The entire life of Christ is the unveiling of God’s radical desire to heal humanity, but not at the expense of, but rather through human agency. Followers of Jesus are called upon to re-incarnate a similar love, not primarily back to God, but to others. It was mentioned in the previous chapter that Orthodoxy is concerned less with debating lists of the universal dimensions of human well-being as in the social sciences, but more in the

⁴⁷ At the risk of stating the obvious, the bridge between the narrative of salvation history and human development in EO is practical reason.

method of repair, or healing. Perhaps nowhere is this better expressed than when the Apostle Paul writes: “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).⁴⁸ The law of Christ is the law of the repair of the brokenness of the world, and it exists both as universal principle (*episteme*) but also as practical reason (*phronesis*). Christian love works and suffers to overcome the actual contradictions, both personal and systemic, in concrete situations. “Bearing one another’s burdens” has many dimensions, but inevitably involves a form of problem-solving on behalf of the challenges facing especially the vulnerable. It is this feature which fulfils the law of Christ, which unleashes and discovers God’s intentions for humanity (*logoi*), and if taken seriously, involves tremendous exercises of practical reasoning. “Bearing one another’s burdens” is as multi-dimensional as human nature itself; it is as specific as the challenges of each situation, and as universal as the entire human family.

But *kenosis* is not only a burden. Ultimately, in the bounty of God’s goodness, self-giving is joyful (Acts 20:35). According to the light provided by the Christian faith, when a person gives, “the human person is accomplishing something by which he thinks he is enhancing his own being” (Staniloae 2000, p. 23). And in the Christian story, after the cross is the resurrection, faith in which can also give hope, inspiration, and enduring power in loving action.

“God gives and seeks great deeds” (Staniloae 1980, p. 117). Synergy is human action operating under the inspiration of, and seeking to re-incarnate, Christ’s *philanthropia* in the world today. Similar to the Trinity, but in concrete, historical fashion, the Incarnation reveals the intended solidarity of all humans, and the lengths to which Christians are called to bring about this solidarity, led by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Unity. Synergy is the

⁴⁸ John Hays notes this passage as key to interpreting both the fuller meaning of the cross, and as *imitatio Christi* (Hays 1996, p. 197). This text also plays a key role in one of the only Orthodox documents dedicated specifically to development (Tsetsis 1983).

doctrine that keeps in harmonious balance the priority of God's action, but coordinates this with and empowers the free actions of humans towards the good of human development. Within this framework, Christian faith and human development, Jerusalem and Athens, are fully integrated.

10. CONCLUSION

This study, now concluded, is the first to offer a detailed analysis of Eastern Orthodoxy in relation to development studies. The fundamental contention of this thesis is that EO theology overlaps remarkably with DS, but also offers unique theological insights that can strengthen the ethical foundations for human development even on social scientific terms. Within EO, to say “The Glory of God is humanity fully alive” means much of what it means in DS: every person experiencing well-being in every dimension, even if faith brings in extra dimensions. For EO, this overlap and mutual enrichment between the domains of religious faith and human development is possible because grace and nature stand in a closer relationship than typically has been the case in the West, and this brings exciting new possibilities for dialogue.

This study employed two distinct, but intersecting strategies to substantiate these claims. The first was to bring into conversation the 20th centuries’ best representatives of the Enlightenment tradition and Eastern Orthodoxy: Amartya Sen and Dumitru Staniloae. The second part of the strategy, and interacting at every stage with the first, was to show how EO’s two fundamental dogmas, the Trinity and the Incarnation, can contribute to a more profound understanding of “change for the better”, the core idea of development studies. This conclusion will now briefly review the argument and highlight the contributions to the academic literatures.

Chapters one through three examined the Trinity in relation to human development. In EO, the Trinity is the foundation for natural theology and is primarily linked to moral experience and especially the longing for greater communion and justice within the human community. Supporting this, the Trinity implies a theological anthropology with three distinct dimensions. Dumitru Staniloae’s, and the patristic formula, is: “persons, in

communion, within the medium of a shared nature”. Almost all current Trinitarian discussions focus on communion (*koinonia* or *perichoresis*), and possibly also person (*hypostasis*), but omit discussing the ethical implications of the category of shared nature (*ousia*) in the *imago dei*. This is important because it means a conspicuous lack of theorizing about a) the shared structures of human existence and b) the unity of the human race—both vital categories for human development. Bringing the category of nature back into the Trinity can revolutionize Trinitarian studies and help remedy the larger tendency that is detrimental to a theology of human development—the separation of grace from nature.

In order to further advance these points, an original configuration was set up to bring the Trinitarian anthropological framework into direct dialogue with the social sciences (and thus DS). The Trinitarian picture (person-communion-nature) was postulated as mirroring, but harmonizing three inchoate concepts widely employed in the social sciences: agency, solidarity, and structures. The configuration advanced was:

Agency = Person

Solidarity = Communion

Structures = Shared Nature

The hypothesis raised at this juncture was whether human development actually demands and operates with this Trinitarian picture of the human condition where each of these three dimensions are treated as intrinsically valuable.

These pieces in place, the strategy was then to examine multiple theories, including theological ones, in light of this Trinitarian picture of the human condition. One important

result was that the liberal-communitarian debate,¹ fundamental both to political philosophy and development studies, can be reshaped by including shared nature. Humans are neither best characterized as primarily individual, nor communitarian beings, but both of these dimensions operating within the unifying medium of a shared human nature. This framework was then used to interpret the failures of Marxist inspired Communism. Communism's failure can be illuminated precisely by analyzing it in terms of these three dimensions: it ran roughshod over agency/persons; it destroyed interpersonal solidarity/communion; and did so because of defective views of both the structure of history and human nature. Nobel Economist Amartya Sen's influential "capability approach" was then examined in view of its ability to address these interrelated post-communist challenges. Sen's own works reveal that he gives an overwhelming value to individual agency in "development as freedom", but too weakly considers other values necessary for human development—these being communion, and shared human nature as a basis for ethical obligation. From these and other cases, it was established that human development tacitly operates with all three of these values simultaneously which are integrated and made explicit through the Trinitarian conceptualization of personhood.

Within this overall Trinitarian approach, especially important however was clarifying the conditions for retrieving the historically abused *nature* category (i.e. slavery is part of the "natural" order). EO provides three insights into the "nature of nature" as a sacred order that can allow it to inform and inspire human development for the modern context. These are: a) human nature understood as a set of diverse natural human functions or capabilities (*logoi*) requiring fulfilment—for example literacy or nutrition, b) human nature as a basis for cosmopolitan ethical obligation—the Samaritan ethic, and c) nature as a dynamic framework (*epektasis*) where the order of creation and understanding of personhood is not

¹ This debate concerns whether humans are best characterized as individual or communal beings.

viewed as static/“Platonic”, but is responsive to and even enhanced through human effort and creativity. These three understandings of the “nature of nature”—as well as the larger categories of agency/person and solidarity/communion—are, in fact, the moral assumptions, or perhaps better, dimensions of personhood, implied by the theory and practice of human development. To summarize this, human development, illuminated by the Trinity, operates on the following levels:

- a) Person (Agency);
- b) Communion (Solidarity);
- c) Nature (Structures), with the following subcategories:
 - a. Diverse human functions requiring fulfilment;
 - b. Shared human nature as a basis for cosmopolitan ethical duties;
 - c. The “order” of nature being not closed, but dynamic, responsive to human intervention and creativity.

The implications of this Trinitarian picture of human development are foundational. For theology, this claim can only be grasped by noting that the Trinity is rarely employed as a basis for social criticism or human development concerns. And even where there are the beginnings of this Trinitarian critique as with the liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, or the Protestants Jurgen Moltmann or Miroslav Volf, shared human nature as a theological category and its various creational structures demanding fulfilment is not in view. This EO Trinitarian picture of the human condition can also inform development studies as it makes explicit the real values operative in human development and foregoes partial solutions (i.e. expanse of only freedoms). Thus this analysis is far-reaching for the literatures in both theology and the social sciences, but especially their nexus.

Beginning in chapter five, the argument shifted from the Trinity to the Incarnation. The Incarnation is the basis for *theosis* or deification (“God became man so that man might become god”), which in Orthodoxy means “change for the better”, revealing a direct overlap with the core definition of DS. This “change for the better” was then examined through Maximus’s categories of *theosis* as the movement from Being, to Well-being, to Eternal-being. In this framework, Being is creation’s dynamic (ontological) structures and capacities as a gift from God; Well-being is the exercise of human agency for the activation of these capacities not merely for oneself, but all who share the same nature; and Eternal-being is the value of the human personality extended beyond the parameters of this life. This chapter demonstrated that in EO, salvation is not otherworldly nor does it deny human action: salvation/*theosis* involves the development of nature’s true tendencies and includes human action for their proper activation.

In this context, a foundational difference was discovered between EO and Sen’s CA, and concerns the suggestive term “well-being”. Sen ascribes “well-being” to an individual whose needs are met, and whose powers (beings and doings—i.e. capabilities) are being expressed. However, “well-being” is considered strictly a property of *individuals* and is separate from morality or other-regarding concerns. (Sen adds a distinct individual “agency” category to cover this.) While EO would agree that well-being involves the activation of individual powers, and EO places a high premium on individual agency in this, a foundational difference is that EO could never attribute the term “well-being” to a person who was not exercising the specifically *moral* or other-regarding expression of human agency. This is to say that a person, even if having their every need met and exercising their creative powers, cannot be experiencing “well-being” (however subjectively content they may feel) if they ignore the plight of the less fortunate. In this way, EO explicitly includes within “well-being” the well-being of others and thus human development concerns.

Moving on, chapter six began examining whether virtue ethics can serve as a bridge between religion and development studies as the literature suggests. This is immediately attractive for EO as *theosis* finds its most complete expression in terms of the virtues. But to systematically address whether the virtues can indeed serve as this bridge between faith and development, the virtues were examined first on their “secular” side, then theological, revealing a complicated landscape and the need for critical scrutiny and multiple perspectives.

On the social science side, Aristotle provided foundational categories for the virtues that remain useful to this day. But he also subscribed to an aristocratic version of the virtues, as well as privileging contemplative reason over practical, both of which have a dark legacy and must be corrected for. Advancing ahead to modern day development, an analysis of the virtues in both Nussbaum and the CSV (Character Strengths and Virtues) showed how using multiple approaches can correct “communitarian” and other deficiencies of singular perspectives. Furthermore, it was shown that Amartya Sen’s individual freedoms can be tethered more reliably to human solidarity by adopting the virtues which he dropped from his mentor, Adam Smith.

The virtues in Western theology were then analyzed to provide a basis for comparison with EO, but also to seek clues into tensions that have existed between religious faith and humanistic development concerns. Protestantism—often wrongly equated with Christianity itself—historically rejected the virtues and bears a tendency to regard the cultivation of any human excellences as *hubris*, thus creating *conceptual* tensions with human development. Catholics, on the other hand, have long embraced the virtues. They separate them, unlike Orthodoxy, into natural and supernatural categories, and have tended to elevate contemplative reason over practical as in neo-scholasticism. This is important because religious truth was viewed as eternal, unchanging, and thus development or

modernization was often viewed as heresy—another factor in the tension between faith and development. However, Neo-Scholasticism tumbled with Vatican II revealing altogether new possibilities for human development many of which are evinced in the social encyclicals.

This background was necessary to reveal the significance of two distinctive features of EO's treatment of the virtues: a) the non-separation of virtues into natural and supernatural categories—thus showing the overlap of grace and nature, and b) the strong role of practical reason (*phronesis*) for Orthodoxy. As Maximus states, “The Logos of God is revealed in practical things and embodied in the commandments” (in Harakas 1983, p. 236), and this means theology/*theoria* only emerges through loving *praxis*. Significant here, *phronesis* was also seen to be at the heart of development studies. EO and CA were compared at this point revealing that unlike in the capability approach that tends either to a) identify specific injustices to address (Sen), or b) provide a list of universal human functions requiring fulfilment (Nussbaum), Orthodoxy (agrees with these but) is, at its heart, a *therapeutic* method for getting humanity back on track for caring for, thinking rationally about, and securing committed action for human development. The goal is *praxis lelogismene*—rational, intelligent thought through act (Harakas 1983, p. 239)—and the virtues are central to this therapy.

The final chapter examined the virtues presented by Staniloae, showing just how close Orthodox human excellences are to the concerns of human development. The case was made that the apex of the virtues, “love” or *agape*, must be both deeply communitarian *and* cosmopolitan simultaneously, a balance not often kept in human development or discussions about the Church as *politeia*, or way of life. The doctrine of synergy was then introduced whereby salvation is understood as a sapiential process of re-incarnating Christ's *philanthropia* in the present historical situation. Synergy gives priority to God's

initiative in history, but in a way that the Incarnation becomes the basis for present day practical reason in the form of problem-solving, of “bearing one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2). This parallels, but provides a theological foundation for Sen’s and development studies emphasis on remedying human deprivations. The study closed, noting Staniloae’s understanding of the cross such that “God gives and seeks great deeds” in the aim of healing the human nature that is “shredded by sin”. Overall, the findings in these chapters on the Incarnation are also foundational and hope to contribute to a better understanding of the bridge between theology and development studies via practical reason and the virtues.

Stepping back from the details of the argument, one of the most obvious results of this research is that it will offset deep ignorance about EO. Many believe that EO is unconcerned with action when rather, as Maximus insists, “theology without actions is the theology of demons” (in Ware 1997, p. 207). Admittedly these themes need retrieval in modern Orthodox life (and especially post socialist countries), but this thesis has shown that EO theology at its core, and salvation itself, is a sapiential process that *emerges* in the constant dialectic between “doing the good” and “knowing the good”. This is the true nature of Orthodoxy’s mysticism, and relative to the certainties of scholasticism, it is mysterious. But this is due to the experiential and practical nature of *phronesis* itself.

The more significant implications of this study, however, can only be seen by viewing the wider sweep of intellectual history. The relationship between the disciplines of theology and the human sciences, and thus their respective territorial domains, was constructed primarily in the West and often in reaction to strongly Augustinian conceptions. This relationship was built without input from EO. EO’s understanding of the human condition and its predicament—namely that it rejects the doctrine of original sin and the primarily forensic view of salvation based on it—is different enough that many answers, and often

the very questions being asked, must now be rethought. EO has the potential to breathe new life into the relation between faith and human development in no small part because grace and nature, faith and reason, human aspiration and theological inspiration, stand in such close proximity.

Unlike some theological approaches which exhibit a thoroughgoing suspicion of Enlightenment concerns, this study has interpreted the moral impetus behind them as a form of natural theology. But it has also raised the question of whether human development can be fully conceptualized—much less actually implemented—without reference to larger sources of meaning. Charles Taylor’s aphorism, “High standards need strong sources” is appropriate here (Taylor 1989). Development studies was chosen as a dialogue partner precisely because it expresses the high standards that are pressing themselves on the conscience of humanity today.

In light of this, it would be disingenuous not to mention an apologetic intent implicit in this thesis. Clement of Alexandria wrote long ago that “we try to find an argument which, by starting from things already believed, is able to create faith in things as yet not believed (in Nesteruk 1993, p. 19). Human development is a noble aspiration implanted in creation and the human conscience by God; it is not limited to Christians. Nonetheless, a careful analysis of the values involved in human development suggests not just the need for a sacred grounding for these values; it reveals the specifically Trinitarian picture of the human condition. Human development cannot be conceptualized simply as the expanse of individual freedoms, or enriching communitarian relationships, or fulfilling nature’s functions. It is all of these dimensions simultaneously, but also in relationship with God who is the “Lover of Humankind” and desires fullness of life for all. But not only does human development point to the Trinity; it points also to the Incarnation. Committed, reliable, effective, and ultimately sacrificial action, which is to say the *real* requirements

for advancing human development in challenged contexts, points to the virtues of self-giving of which Christ is the Exemplar.

At this final juncture it can be fruitful to ask: what kind of practice does the argument in this thesis ultimately recommend? It will be recalled from the introduction that this study emerged from almost fifteen years experience with grassroots youth activism in Romania. This closing section argues that real advances in human development such as those implied both by the theology of EO and the CA will, in fact, require much more attention to this neglected area.

Amartya Sen's theory rightly calls for people to be engaged in the removal of injustices. However, the next logical, but more challenging question must be asked: "where are these people that should be thus engaged"? Sen seems to assume that if people are somehow made politically free, they will begin assuming these roles. But this is untenable because it assumes that persons in contexts with painful socio-historical legacies such as Communism (and most development contexts) will magically become empowered agents and work for the common good once external restraints are removed. This assumption, as the post-socialist experience has demonstrated, is naive.

This study has argued that human development requires the cultivation of the virtues and especially of solidarity, and these virtues or strengths are won through experience, practice, and habituation. What has not been stressed in this thesis is that this must begin in childhood. As Aristotle long ago rightly argued: "So it is a matter of no little importance what sort of habits we form from the earliest age—it makes a vast difference, or rather all the difference in the world" (Aristotle 2004, p. 32).

Development has focused too much on formulating better “ideas of justice”, and not enough on forming *enough* actors who will “practice justice”. Poverty is not a theoretical concept to be conquered once and for all in the academic arena, but is a multitude of painful burdens, concrete difficulties, and injustices requiring resolution in almost every context. Human development, if it is to become more than academic jargon, must address itself to the cultivation of *enough* persons to remove *enough* of these burdens to tip the scales of societies towards justice. This can be expressed as a universal maxim of practical reason: *humanity will never solve the problem of development without the development of more problem-solvers.*

Thus, real strides forward in human development necessitate the cultivation of armies of change agents. This raises the troubling question of whose values, and how this cultivation process is not to thwart agency. The best approaches in youth development successfully address this by creating a “space” where youth themselves are empowered to identify and solve real community needs—and through this process enhance their sense of agency and learn all sorts of valuable life skills (Sherrod, Torney-Purta et al. 2012). Far from being paternalistic, within this “learn by doing” process, virtues of compassion and leadership skills emerge in the process of addressing specific burdens and needs in local communities. For example, youth in a beautiful but extremely poor coal mining region in Romania (the only future of this area being in tourism) realized that the construction of outhouses could help attract tourists to campsites at a national park that were soiled with human waste and toilet trash. Youth identified the need, learned the skills of project management, raised local funds, recruited volunteer carpenters and other in-kind contributions, and built three outhouses—and the area radically improved.² If such youth-led projects seem like a drop

² See <http://www.impact-clubs.org/> and (Thorup 2005; Hoksbergen 2010) for more about the youth activism model built in Romania. Here is another project example:

Constanta, a busy seaside port in Romania long known for its lasciviousness, was dotted with “spice shops”. These set up near schools and sold drugs that weren’t yet technically illegal, but were

in the ocean of human development challenges, the words of Augusto Boal are appropriate here: “the direction of the journey is more important than the size of the steps” (Boal 2006, p. 108). Launching more change agents, more youth onto the pathway of problem-solving on behalf of the common good, is the next logical step in human development and it must begin with youth.

This “learn by doing”, “service learning” pedagogy was designed to bring practical Christian love into the heart of the educational process.³ Besides being the outworking of the logic of the CA, for Orthodoxy, this is a form of “eupraxis”, an example of the positive asceticism that Staniloae called upon *all* to participate in (Staniloae 2000, p. 6). Not only is this theologically appropriate given the focus on practical reasoning in Orthodoxy, but increasing youth social activism is especially relevant for overcoming the learned helplessness and lack of social solidarity that afflict post-communist societies. An EO version of “Sunday School” along these lines can bring a problem-solving version of Christian love into the heart of Orthodox societies.

Long-term, sustainable development, to be more than a slogan, must overcome dependencies and this means developing more change agents, more problem-solvers working for the common good in every challenged situation and every sphere and station of society, and based on local values. The scale necessary for this to be effective can only happen if various public institutions, the Church, the school system, NGO’s, and

nevertheless dangerous and thousands of youth were addicted and lives and families were being destroyed. The Constanta IMPACT Club decided that these “spice shops” must be shut down. They wrote a project, and first approached the Mayor. He ignored their request. They were undaunted and then canvassed the city and collected over 1000 signatures. They then organized a city-wide march that attracted thousands of marchers, rallying around the theme: “Don’t throw your life away for 10 lei” (\$3). The Mayor was there. At the end of the march, a young teenage woman in an IMPACT club came to the microphone to speak to the crowd. She spoke of the awful things about these “spice shops”, and then divulged that she too was addicted, and she begged and pleaded for help. The mayor relented, and city-wide these drug dens were closed.

³ This was reported in extensive conversations with the pioneer of “service learning” Dr. Jim Kielsmeier; see also <http://jimkielsmeier.wordpress.com/collected-writings/>.

international donors collaborate on youth development of this type. This is an “overlapping consensus”, rooted in practical reason, and is the logical extension of both the capability approach and Eastern Orthodoxy.

11. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Apophaticism: the idea that God is beyond words or concepts; in Orthodoxy, it is also the idea that the human person is beyond concepts as well. This takes apophaticism beyond mere negation.

Arête: the Greek word for virtues. Virtues are specific excellences within specific spheres of action, or disposition.

CA: the Capabilities Approach, otherwise known as Human Development, led by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. It has been the background theory for the United Nations Human Development reports since 1990.

Cataphaticism: via positive, way of ascertaining theological truths by affirmation.

Contemplative reason or *episteme*: this, according to Aristotle, is the realm of the invariable, or what is true by necessity. It is the domain of science proper. This is distinguished from both *techne* (rational knowledge involved in producing an object or art) and *phronesis*.

CSV: Character Strengths and Virtues, associated with the Positive Psychology movement of Martin Seligman.

Epektasis: Gregory of Nyssa's idea of "perpetual progress". Staniloae writes:

This means that nature is structured in such a way that it leaves room for human interventions that do not take into consideration the totality of nature's exact laws and that these laws are not predetermined to yield the most useful results all by themselves, but instead find their wholeness through the intervention of human freedom (Staniloae 2000, p. 47).

Eudaimonia: Aristotle's term for happiness, well-being, or flourishing;

Logoi: One of the most important terms in this thesis. Lossky calls these "norms of existence"; Maximus calls them the divine intentions. Key here is that these norms of nature include the biological and sensible realm and not merely the intelligible; they are the shared principles of existence. *Logoi* is a polyvalent term which also includes virtues and commands. The two Great commands (called *logoi*) correspond to the fundamental functions of human nature, and that is communion with both God and man. The virtues are also *logoi* in that they structure human agency to live a truly natural life, which is to say according to God's intentions. The highest *logos* or intention is voluntary communion, the "principle of unification without violence to individualized multiplicity" (Thunberg 1995, p. 135). The Latin translation of *logoi* was *rationes*. *Logoi* are (in principle) the realm of science, of universal principles, laws or tendencies. *Logos/logoi* often means the "what-ness" of existence, which is contrasted with the term *tropos*, the "who-ness" of existence in its personalization.

Phronesis: The rational knowledge of appropriate human actions and attitudes. Aristotle's definition is very precise: "a true state, reasoned, and capable of action with regard to the things that are bad or good for man". Thus it involves reason, action, and moral deliberation on the ends of human activity.

Polis: the Greek word for city-state, but often means a specific community that senses itself as such.

Politeia: this is the Greek term translated for what is now known as Plato's *The Republic*. It includes ideas of the founding constitution, the rights of citizens, and the form of government (Liddell and Scott 1985). Ethicist Stanley Harakas uses this term extensively

for the Church (Harakas 1983) often as the “way of life”. It is used in the NT to denote, *inter alia*, the freedom that comes from citizenship (Acts 22:28).

Theosis: deification or salvation in Orthodoxy.

Well-being and *well-being*: capitalized Well-being is the technical middle term for *theosis* in Maximus’s triad, Being, Well-being, and Eternal-being. When referring to this triad, whether it is Being or Eternal-being, the capitalized form is used. This is especially important for distinguishing between Well-being and well-being, the latter being the term as used in the social sciences.

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